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WEEKEND

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## Cook may quit Cabinet to run as Scots PM

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

ROBIN COOK, the Foreign Secretary, is considering running for the post of Scotland's First Minister — effectively Prime Minister north of the border — after the Scottish parliament is elected in 1999.

His decision will have key implications for Tony Blair's first serious Cabinet reshuffle, to be carried out next spring or in early summer.

Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, has long been regarded as the hot favourite for the job of heading the first Scottish government. But Mr Cook was said by senior aides yesterday to be seriously considering the matter, and has not made up his mind.

The two had a private dinner two weeks ago, but suggestions that they had done a deal were discounted by sources close to Mr Cook. "It was more a meeting about how they could handle the inevitable speculation that would arise," an aide said.

If Mr Cook were to decide to opt for the job, he would be expected to resign from the Cabinet next summer to prepare for the Scottish elections. Friends said that he would make his decision over the next few months. One said he believed the odds were on Mr Cook staying at Westminster, "but I could easily be wrong".

The Foreign Secretary would be the dream candidate of the Labour Left in Scotland and there are suspicions that he would relish the opportunity to challenge the tight financial rein that Gordon Brown is expected to exercise over the parliament. Some of his closest friends, however, say that he is enjoying the job of Foreign Secretary and has never abandoned his ambition to lead the Labour Party.

Ministers will be surprised by Mr Cook's decision to leave

open the prospect of a move to Scotland. His decision will determine the shape of Mr Blair's first big reshuffle.

If Mr Cook decided to go for the Scottish job, it would mean a wide-ranging reshuffle, and a promotion for someone to the third most powerful job in the Government after the Prime Minister's and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The disclosure that Mr Cook is considering abandoning Westminster to forge a new career in Scotland came as a survey showed little interest among his colleagues to join him at Edinburgh. Just over a dozen MPs were prepared to say they would put themselves forward for the new Scottish parliament, *The Scotsman*, which conducted the survey, reported.

The survey, in which 62 of the 72 Scottish MPs were interviewed, showed that many were staying south of the border because their areas of interest would remain within Westminster's remit.

In his reshuffle, the Prime Minister plans to bring at least four newcomers into the Cabinet. He intends to give the present team about a year and then make changes.

Mr Blair is expected to bring into the cabinet Peter Mandelson, his leading adviser and Minister without Portfolio, and Stephen Byers, the modernising Education Minister, who has made a mark in his first year.

Other front-running candidates for promotion are Tessa Jowell, the Health Minister, who took much of the flak for the Government in the Formula One sponsorship row but still came away with a satisfactory deal from Europe; Alan Milburn, another Health Minister whose Green Paper on the future structuring of the service was well received; and Hilary Armstrong, the Local Government Minister.

If Mr Blair wanted to promote from the Left, he could advance Michael Meacher, whose quietly efficient performance as Environment Minister has been hailed by Cabinet ministers.

Mr Mandelson is expected to be put into a job where he can retain the responsibility for the Millennium Dome, one of the trickiest tasks in the Government.

For that reason he may again be denied his wish for a big departmental brief and instead be promoted within the Cabinet Office to the post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, held now by David Clark, who has been fighting a rearguard campaign against demolition.



A confrontation between a member of the Bicester Hunt and anti-blood sports activists yesterday. Despite widespread protests, threatened attacks by extremists did not materialise

## Hunters saddle up for show of defiance

By Daniel McGrory

HUNTSMEN and their supporters turned out in near record numbers yesterday to defend their traditional Boxing Day meets and defy protesters who predicted this would be the last year that it would be legal to ride to hounds.

Threatened attacks from extremist saboteurs did not materialise, although there were noisy protests at many of the 280 meets and in Wales huntsmen claimed that seven of their hounds had been poisoned.

The League Against Cruel Sports

and other anti-blood sports groups insisted they were not involved in the incident involving the Tredegar Farmers' Pack hounds.

Protesters said they were determined to avoid any violent confrontations for fear of alienating public opinion. They said they were confident that hunting would be banned before 2000.

The British Field Sports Society argued they had more than 300,000 participants and supporters out yesterday compared with just 1,000 protesters, who were present at a handful of hunts. Pamela Morton of the society, said: "All things considered, it has been

a good day without any serious trouble. The hunting was good too." Many of Britain's best-known hunts were out in force including the Belvoir, Berkeley and the Duke of Beaufort's foxhounds though without its most high-profile supporters, the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles. The Prince was reported to be taking part in a pheasant and partridge shoot at Sandringham with his sons.

At the Quorn Hunt near Melton Mowbray, Charles Geary, Master of the Hunt, said he was sure that this would not be his final meet. "I shall keep coming back for as long

as I can. There will definitely be a meet next year and hopefully into the next century," he said. "This is a tradition going back hundreds of years and it would be a disaster if it was ever banned from this country."

Michael Foster, the Labour MP whose Private Member's Bill to ban hunting with hounds is thought unlikely to succeed, said: "I think that the message is loud and clear to those hunting this Boxing Day — their days are numbered."

Publicity hunt, page 3  
Leading article, page 21



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### Housing prices set to ease off

The Halifax believes that house price rises will increase by just 5 per cent in 1998 after a 12 per cent increase in 1997. A shortage of available properties, which affected the house market this year, is likely to ease as more homeowners decide to sell rather than to hold out for higher prices. Page 39

### Three killed as tree crushes car

A father, his daughter and her boyfriend were killed when a tree fell on their car, taking the death toll in the Christmas storm to 13. Gerald Ross, 56, his daughter Ruth, 29, and her boyfriend, David White, 30, were killed as they made their way home from a party in Gwent. Page 5

### United increase lead to six points

Manchester United extended their lead in the FA Cup to six points with a victory over Everton while both Blackburn Rovers and Chelsea dropped points. The scores in United's 2-0 win were Henning Berg and Andy Cole. Page 25

## BBC claims win as festive ratings fall

By Carol Midgley, Media Correspondent

THE BBC claimed victory in the festive television ratings war yesterday after its laddish comedy *Men Behaving Badly* emerged as the most popular Christmas Day programme, attracting 15.5 million viewers.

But these "unconsolidated" figures show a slump in comparison with last year when the top show, *Only Fools and Horses*, had an audience of more than 21 million. *EastEnders* (BBC), which attracted 17 million viewers on Christmas Day 1996, achieved an audience of only 12.3 million this year. ITV's *Coronation Street*, watched by nearly 15 million last Christmas, pulled in 12.6 million.

The Queen's Christmas Broadcast also failed to create the huge surge in viewing figures predicted after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The broadcast, made in a documentary-style format, attracted an estimated 12 million people to ITV and BBC1 — one million more than last year. As recently as 1993 the broadcast was achieving an audience of more than 10

## THE SATURDAY TIMES Bigger and Better

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The great comic

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### THE TOP TEN

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- 2 *One Foot in the Grave* (BBC1) 15.1m
- 3 *Coronation Street* (ITV) 12.6m
- 4 *EastEnders* (BBC1) 12.3m
- 5 *They Think It's All Over* (BBC1) 12m
- 6 *The Mask* (BBC1) 9.9m
- 7 *Emmerdale* (ITV) 9.5m
- 8 *New Festive Bloomers* (BBC1) 9.2m
- 9 *Pinetrees: The Movie* (BBC1) 8.6m
- 10 *Animal Hospital* (BBC1) 8.5m

## This story should be read from left to right

By Robin Young  
THE customer is always right, but possibly very stupid. That is the conclusion the *New Scientist* draws after noticing how companies often state the obvious when labelling everyday products.

The magazine cites as an example of such dumbing-down the warning on a 500g packet of Sainsbury's peanuts — "Contains nuts". An American airline was so concerned that passengers might not know what to do with

its packets of peanuts that a printed message said: "Instructions: Open packet, eat contents."

America is the source of the sillier-seeming alerts. There drivers have stickers on the wing mirrors of bikes and cars saying: "Remember — objects seen in mirror are behind you." John Hoyland, editor of *New Scientist*'s Feedback column, said: "In America people sue if they do something they were not warned about. That is why we have had a cigarette

lighter advising users not to light flame near the face."

Other examples include:  
■ From America, an insect spray boasting "Kills All Insects", but adding: "Warning — harmful to bee."  
■ From Sweden, a chainsaw whose packaging warns: "Do not try to stop chain with hands."  
■ From Britain, Tesco's tiramisu dessert carries the advice "Do not turn upside down" — on the box bottom. Marks & Spencer's bread and butter

pudding warns: "Take care — product will be hot after heating." And Rowenta, the electrical manufacturer, advises: "Do not iron clothes on body." Nytol, a mixture to help people to sleep, cautions that it "may cause drowsiness". Boots cough syrup for young children urges: "Do not drive car or operate machinery. Avoid alcoholic drinks." Translation difficulties may explain advice on a Korean kitchen knife: "Warning — keep out of children."

## WINTER SALE STARTS SATURDAY 27th DECEMBER

	FROM	TO
SUITS	£450	£295
JACKETS	£395	£195
BLAZERS	£295	£195
TROUSERS	£125	£75
SHIRTS	£59	£39
MULTI BUY 3 OR MORE £135 EACH		
TIES	£49	£24.50
MULTI BUY 3 OR MORE £120 EACH		
MOLESKIN TROUSERS	£95	£65
CORDUROY TROUSERS	£89	£59

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TODAY IN THE TIMES



**'People come to cackle, then they turn contemplative'**

Valerie Grove meets David Benson, Kenneth Williams impersonator  
Page 19



**'I was an ugly duckling and now I'm a swan'**

Charleen Spitzer, lead singer of Texas  
Page 18

# Police call for travel ban on soccer hooligans

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

POLICE last night demanded that the Government make it compulsory for anyone convicted of football violence to be barred from travelling abroad as a supporter.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, had earlier run into criticism from supporters' associations after instigating moves to prevent convicted hooligans from travelling to next year's World Cup finals in France by forcing them to report to police stations during matches.

The police also expressed serious doubts over his plan and said that a key part of the legislation was flawed. They called for an order barring travel abroad to support England to be made a mandatory part of any sentence imposed on an offender convicted of football-related violence.

Mr Straw yesterday wrote to judges and magistrates urging them to make greater use of an existing order when dealing with people convicted

of football-related violence. The order, introduced as part of the Football Spectators Act, bars convicted hooligans from travelling abroad to watch matches involving the English and Welsh teams. Under the restriction order, an offender must report to a police station at the time the match is taking place or face prosecution.

Detective Inspector Peter Chapman, who heads the National Criminal Intelligence Service's hooliganism unit at Scotland Yard, said that under the legislation police could not arrest a convicted hooligan until he failed to report to a police station at an appointed time, usually during a match.

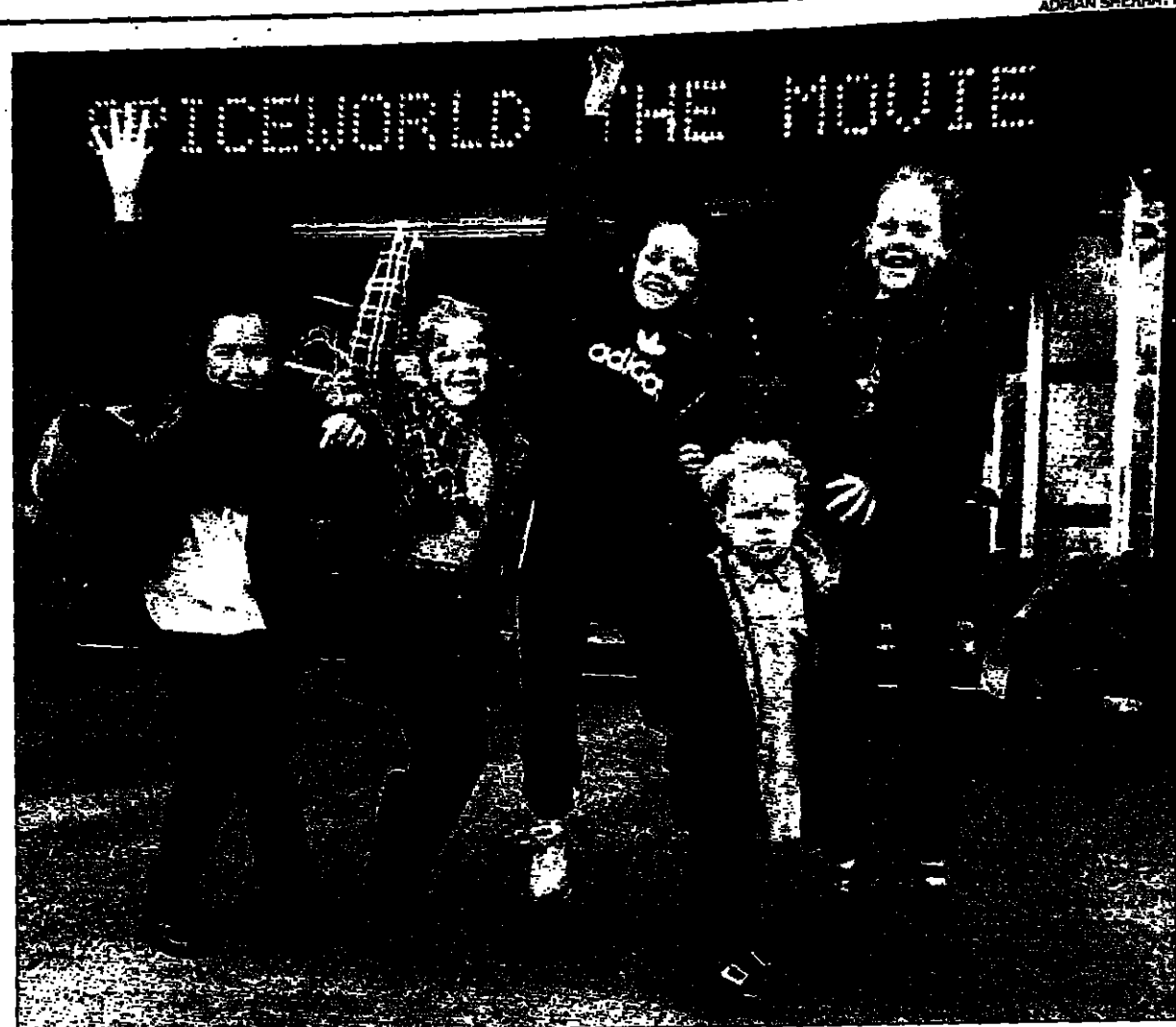
Mr Chapman told *The World at One* on BBC Radio 4: "Say that an individual is obliged to report to his local police station at 4pm on Saturday. The nonsense of it is I can see that individual pass through Heathrow four, five or six hours earlier, knowing

full well he is going to that particular football match and can't do anything about it."

Alison Pilling, of the Football Supporters' Association, said: "These new rules will only apply to people who are convicted between now and the World Cup finals, not to people who already have convictions. It is not really going to have much effect as a measure against hooligans and, as well as that, I think it is going to prove to be unworkable."

Mr Straw is concerned that only 10 restriction orders have been imposed since 1989. He said: "It's for that reason that I have written to magistrates' courts, the Crown Prosecution Service and indeed the Crown Courts to remind them of the power to give restriction orders in the expectation that when they are more familiar with the power they will use it far more effectively."

Football, pages 25-29



Little-girl power: five fans awaiting Spiceworld's premiere at the Empire, Leicester Square, yesterday

## Spiceworld adds seasoning to British films' hottest year

THE release yesterday of *Spiceworld* — *The Movie* caps six months of extraordinary success for the British film industry. If the Spice Girls' film fulfils expectations in the final week of the year, British films will have accounted for half of box-office takings in this country since August.

Two films in particular have fuelled the success: *The Full Monty* and *Bean*. Both have generated more than \$100 million (£61 million) in box-office takings, a level of business normally reserved for Hollywood blockbusters. *The Full Monty* has been the most popular film in Britain this year, and is just £5 million away from topping *Jurassic Park* as the highest-grossing film in the United Kingdom.

The story of a group of unemployed men in Sheffield who take to stripping to make money and rediscover their pride and joie de vivre along the way, opened on August 17 and has been showing around the country since. Provided it can hold on to a few screens for a little while longer, it should succeed Steven Spielberg's dinosaur movie in the top spot.

*Bean*, based on Rowan Atkinson's television character Mr Bean, has been enormously popular around the world. It was the favourite non-Italian film in Italy, the

Homegrown productions look

likely to reel in half of Britain's

box-office takings since August,

writes Philip Delves Broughton

second most popular film in Germany and the fourth most successful in Britain. *Bean* has made fortunes for its creators, Richard Curtis, who also wrote *Four Weddings and A Funeral* and television's *Blackadder*, Atkinson and the London-based film company Working Title.

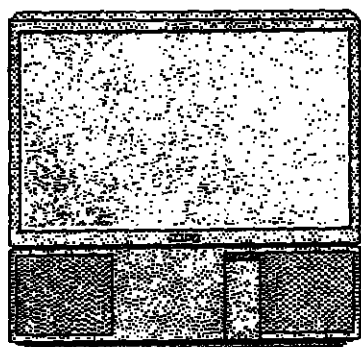
Working Title has cracked the Christmas market with *The Borrowers*, based on Mary Norton's children's books. Tim Bevan, the head of Working Title, said in a

recent interview with the *Times* that it was his ambition to succeed in the lucrative family film market, which is dominated by Disney. "We are very bad at making family movies in this country," he said. "Family, when it works, is phenomenally successful."

The line within the industry is that luck rather than any hard and fast formula has produced the latest bumper six months.

Films, Metro, pages 26-30

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Sony SCALA 1 lifestyle mini hi-fi system with CD, RDS tuner, auto-reverse tape, remote control, separate components, brushed aluminium finish, Dolby S, Electrostatic speakers	£1,400	£1,099
Sony MHC-W35 mini hi-fi system with 3 CD changer, RDS tuner, twin auto-reverse tape and remote control. 2x 55W RMS output	£600	£449
Sony CCD-TRV64 Hi8 camcorder with colour LCD screen, stereo sound, 30x zoom and remote control	£900	£749

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## MPs rally to minister over son's drug arrest

By ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Cabinet minister whose son was arrested over allegations of supplying cannabis won the backing yesterday of senior constitutionalists and MPs, who ruled out any need for resignation.

The cross-party consensus has lifted any lingering doubts about the future of the unnamed minister, who has won the wholehearted support of the Prime Minister.

The Labour leadership also took heart yesterday from two positive leading articles in *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, which is traditionally hostile, commending the minister for deciding to accompany the 17-year-old to the police.

Vernor Bogdanor, Professor of Government at Oxford University, said that there was no precedent for a minister to resign because of the conduct of a child. "Even if the minister's name comes out, I do not think that person would have to go," he said.

The only reason a minister should stand down would be if he or she had failed in their legal responsibility as a parent, or if they were exposed to ridicule by the activities of the child which made their position untenable.

"But this child is 17. If the child had been aged under 16, it could have been different if it was shown that parents had failed in their duty. But this is different. They have fulfilled their duty as citizens."

Papers are expected to be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service early next month. The minister took the boy to a police station after being contacted by *The Mirror* with evidence that the teenager had allegedly been involved in supplying drugs. He was arrested and released on bail.

Tony Blair's support for the minister, who cannot be named to protect the identity

of the boy, underlined the Government's determination to see off any calls for resignation.

Ann Widdecombe, the former Prisons Minister, was also adamant that the minister should remain. "MPs cannot be held responsible for the activities of their relatives unless they are very young. The minister should stay put and be given privacy."

"This rule should not change if it involves grown-up or nearly grown-up relatives. It becomes only borderline when the child is much younger. Then it is harder to have a hard and fast rule."

"But a 17-year-old is old enough to legally smoke, he can drive a lethal ton of metal, and he can go to war for his country. You cannot suddenly say that a 17-year-old, who is entrusted to do all those things, suddenly becomes a parental responsibility when a government minister is involved."

The MP for Maidstone and The Weald added that the Tories would not seek to make political capital out of the situation. "It will not happen," she said. Ministers will be relieved at the cross-party support for the minister, which was confirmed by Martin Bell, the Independent MP for Tatton, who was elected on an anti-sleaze platform. Mr Bell said: "There should be no question of resignation. I cannot think of anyone who should say that the minister should go. This is a personal tragedy. It is nothing to do with ministerial responsibility."

Mr Bell, like Professor Bogdanor and Miss Widdecombe, conceded that the situation might have changed if the child had been younger. "But certainly not when it involves a child of that age. This is a time for understanding and sympathy, not for a witch-hunt."

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Ballot box could be put at the checkout

Supermarkets could be turned into polling stations under plans being considered by Hilary Armstrong, the Local Government Minister, to increase the turnout in local authority elections. But an option for elections to be held on a Sunday has encountered resistance because of objections from the Churches. Many politicians do not campaign on a Sunday for fear of offending churchgoers. Supermarkets are already at the heart of the Government's thinking for its new Individual Savings Accounts (Isas), which will replace Tessa and Personal Equity Plans in 1999.

#### Troops in Ulster delay

A planned new year withdrawal of hundreds of British soldiers from Northern Ireland has been postponed amid fears that the loyalist ceasefire could break down. Loyalist groups are spending the Christmas period reviewing their support for the talks at Stormont, which they believe have conceded too much to the IRA and Sinn Féin.

#### Mecca bingo hall attack

A bingo hall in Luton that changed its name from Top Rank to Mecca suffered £3,500 worth of damage in what police said was a "racially motivated" attack on Christmas Day. Earlier this month, the town's 20,000 Muslim population said it was an insult to their religion when the previous sign was replaced with one for Mecca.

#### Food safety to hit prices

Food prices may have to increase after the Treasury won a battle to place the cost of a hygiene and nutrition standards agency on producers. A White Paper, to be published early next year, confirms the industry will have to provide millions of pounds to pay for the Food Standards Agency, which will have influence over diet, labelling, and production.

#### Sales likely to net £7m

Sales begin in earnest today, with bargain hunters expected to spend £7 million on clothes, shoes and other non-edible goods — a 9 per cent increase on last year. The Centre for Economic Business Research, which monitors high street spending, said that the biggest reductions would be in the non-food sector, where £3 billion of stock will be on sale into the new year.

#### Mother's gone to blazes

Fire chiefs in Wiltshire have appealed to Women's Institute members to volunteer as part-time firefighters. The county is short of about 70. Nick Westbrook, chairman of the county fire authority, said: "Mothers whose children are at school would be ideal to be on-call during the day." They would receive retainers of up to £1,632, with more for training and callouts.

#### See how they run

An Irish Member of Parliament has called for a nationwide ban on mouse racing after reports that University College in Galway had provided runners from its laboratory for a mouse-racing festival. Billy Kelleher, a Fianna Fail representative, criticised the festival, staged this weekend in Ballymacward, Co Galway, as "a Mickey Mouse event".



# Boy aged 16 is found hanged in police cell

By Bill Hoffmann

A BOY aged 16 hanged himself in a police cell only hours after being arrested on Christmas Day on suspicion of attempted burglary. David Parsons was found dead by officers at 7.10pm in a cell at Cockett police station in Swansea. He had been held hours earlier near his parents' home in the Penlan district of Swansea. Last

night police were mystified why a teenager, whom neighbours described as "a good kid and a bit of a football fan" would kill himself over a relatively small matter which, if there were a conviction, might have been punished by a small fine.

South Wales police have launched an investigation in co-operation with the Police Complaints Authority and Richard

Morgan, the Swansea coroner, into the incident. Tony and June Parsons, the boy's parents, were being comforted by relatives. A family spokesman said: "Everyone is very distressed. We are still waiting to find out exactly what happened."

Police refused to give details of David's death or why he was being detained on a minor matter.

Alan Williams, MP for Swansea West, said: "The pressures on a

youngster in custody at this time of year would have been that much greater but I don't want to speculate without knowing any of the background." He added: "It is strange that this should have happened in a police station. I am sure that the police will be as anxious as anyone that lessons are learnt to make sure that this does not happen again."

A school friend said the hanging did not make sense. "He was an upbeat kid. But I guess you never know what really goes on inside somebody's head."

Fatal reform groups have said that suspects or prisoners are often at their most low during the first hours and days after being either arrested or imprisoned, or after receiving details of a minimum sentence to be served.

The number of prisoners who have killed themselves in England and Wales reached 70 this year. Sir David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, is to hold a full inquiry next year into suicides in the 135 jails in Britain.

The pressure group Inquest, which helps families to investigate deaths of relatives in custody, has been campaigning for young offenders to be removed from a prison environment and for the

introduction of new "anti-suicide measures". A spokeswoman said: "How many more deaths does it take before the authorities take some positive action?"

Last year 64 prisoners killed themselves, including two women and 12 aged 21 and under. Contributory reasons for the suicides are believed to be prison overcrowding, lack of time outside cells, lack of exercise and bad nutrition.

## Rape may be clue to Brittany murder

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRENCH police may have uncovered a significant new lead in their hunt for the killer of 13-year-old British schoolgirl Caroline Dickinson.

A judicial source said that officers were to carry out DNA testing on a 30-year-old man accused of committing rape in circumstances similar to those that led to Caroline's death in Brittany 17 months ago. The former ambulance man, who has not been identified, is alleged to have attacked a ten-year-old girl after breaking into her house on the outskirts of Paris last week while her parents were out.

After the girl had identified the man from photographs taken in a restaurant where the family had eaten on the evening of the rape, he allegedly confessed, saying he had acted from a "sudden impulse".

Detectives drew an immediate parallel with the murder of the schoolgirl from Launceston College, Cornwall, as she slept in a dormitory at a youth hostel in Pléne-Fougères in July last year.



Pam and Allan Davies, who are sharing care of their grandson, Ben

## Baby slept while mother was left for dead in car

By Daniel McGrory

THE family of a suspected "road rage" victim described yesterday how she was left for dead with severe head injuries while her five-month-old son lay asleep on the back seat of her car.

Police last night charged three people, including a 24-year-old woman, over the attack on Christmas Eve. All three will appear before a special magistrates' court later today.

Joanne Davies's parents left

her bedside in the intensive care ward yesterday to help police to appeal for more witnesses to the attack.

Allan and Pam Davies said that their grandson, Ben, was left on the back seat while their daughter, 20, was pulled from the car after a collision at a roundabout at Pembroke, West Wales, and beaten over the head. Police say that Miss Davies's boyfriend, Mark Duignan, 23, was also assaulted while the couple and their

child went on a late-night shopping trip.

Police believe that the baby may have slept through the attack on his parents. He was not harmed.

Witnesses said that the incident began as the couple's Vauxhall Corsa was involved in an accident under the town's Christmas tree.

Mrs Davies said: "It's been the worst Christmas you can imagine. My daughter and the baby were due to spend it with



Joanne Davies, who suffered severe head injuries in the suspected "road rage" attack

us. It's his first Christmas but his mother has spent it in intensive care. Words cannot express how we feel."

Her husband, a company director, said: "I'd never heard of road rage in my day and it's not the sort of thing you expect in a quiet town."

Both sets of grandparents are sharing the duty of looking after the baby while her boyfriend remained at the hospital.

Detective Inspector Roger Hughes said: "There are

bound to be witnesses to what happened that night and although we have people in custody, it's still vital that anyone who might have seen something comes forward."

Miss Davies, who had worked at a playgroup before having her child, was taken to Withybush General Hospital in Haverfordwest, but transferred to a specialist head injuries unit 60 miles away. She was yesterday in a "critical but stable" condition after

undergoing emergency surgery at Morriston Hospital in Swansea.

Police last night charged Shane Doyle, 26, with the attempted murder of Miss Davies, attempting to pervert the course of justice and assaulting Mr Duignan.

Christine Reilly, 24, was charged with assisting offenders and attempting to pervert the course of justice. Simon Evans, 18, was charged with assisting offenders.

## Parents drive off without son, 5

A BOY aged five was reunited with his parents yesterday after they accidentally left him at a petrol station.

Bill and Daryl Collins drove off separately from the Tesco garage in Great Dunmow, Essex, without realising that their son, Kyle, had gone to buy sweets. The boy was spotted by staff and taken to the police station. Meanwhile, Mr and Mrs Collins drove for more than an hour until a radio appeal alerted them to their missing passenger.

The couple, from Elsenham, were near Mrs Collins's mother's house in West Mersea, where they were due to have dinner. Kyle had slipped out of his mother's Volvo while she paid for petrol and, when she returned, she presumed he had got into her husband's hire car, which had already left.

Sergeant Trevor Newman, of Dunmow police, said: "Kyle was initially upset when he realised they had gone off without him. But he loved it at the police station and seemed to be having a grand adventure." He said Kyle was lucky to have been spotted by garage staff.

## Foxes out of the picture as hunters become the hunted

Stephen Farrell watches rival packs in action for Boxing Day

TRADITIONAL hostilities ranged across the Oxfordshire countryside yesterday as hunt enthusiasts and protesters each lost their quarry in a chase for the moral high ground.

With a prospective ban leading urgency to the biggest day of the hunting calendar, both sides were determined to gather in force for the Boxing Day meet of the Bicester With Whaddon Chase.

Clad in the familiar scarlet and black jackets, 60 horsemen and women of the 150-year-old hunt were booed and cheered in equal measure as they assembled at 11am in Bicester Market Square, with a heavy police presence. One side of the square was lined with local supporters, the other with demonstrators from the League Against Cruel Sports, waving banners and shouting abuse. The mood among riders was more defiant than confident. A distinct note of triumphalism was detectable among the anti-hunters after the 260-vote House of Commons majority last month for the anti-hunting bill of the Labour backbencher Michael Foster. They adapted the football chant "Ere we go" to "One more year".

The hunt supporters included the formidable presence of Anne Heseltine, wife of the former Deputy Prime Minister, who stood watching with approval as riders leant down to receive glasses of port and sherry. Mrs Heseltine now rarely rides except on the flatter terrain of Exmoor, but she and her husband allow the Bicester to use their local estate.

She accepted that protesters were entitled to make their point peacefully, but claimed that her car had twice been



Sign of protest: another of yesterday's demonstrations at the Vale of Aylesbury Hunt in Buckinghamshire

vandalised in central London because of its pro-hunting stickers. "We know it is a minority sport, but because we are in a minority there is no need to overrun us. Other minorities are not stopped from doing things which have always been perfectly legal."

Baroness Mallett, a Labour peer and lifelong hunting supporter, sat astride her mount, Archie, a few yards away and insisted the battle was not lost: "We have been hearing that it is the end of

hunting since the end of the last century, with the growth of roads and the railways. The truth is that it wouldn't make sense to stop it. These people riding today are farmers, they have to feed and look after animals each day. It is the people who have no responsibility for animals who do all the shouting."

League supporters were dressed in a mixture of brightly coloured jackets, jeans, trainers, AIDS-awareness ribbons, Barbour-style coats and

flat caps. Those waving a banner "The End is Nigh" were angered when they noticed that their singing was being conducted in ironic fashion by the top-hatted Timothy Cassel, whose mount was flanked by others with red tinsel intervenes in their manner. Unabashed when the singing turned to shouts of "Break your neck", Mr Cassel, 55, said: "It's just a Boxing Day ritual. We don't take them too seriously."

Penny Little, a league organiser, pleaded with the crowd for a peaceful protest, and insisted that her side had won the moral argument: "Feelings are definitely running high. People who hate hunting hate hunters, and hunters hate us, so there's mutual loathing."

In the field, the ritual turned into a convoy of chases within chases. As the riders and their 35 Welsh-cross foxhounds hurried through fields after the fox, they were pursued by a van filled with 15 khaki-clad hunt saboteurs, the direct-action branch of the protest movement, equipped with high-powered binoculars, two-way radios, and their own horns and whips to distract the hounds.

The "sabs" were sometimes pursued, sometimes flanked, and sometimes led, by two vans of Thames Valley Police, equipped with long-lens cameras, tape recorders and video cameras. In the rear were an assortment of hunt followers, stewards and onlookers.

As the unlikely procession snaked through country roads, hunters and saboteurs alternately addressed each other on first-name terms and made claims of violence and intimidation.

The foxes got away.



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## Ban recedes into next century

By Andrew Pierce

THE traditional Boxing Day hunt could continue beyond the millennium in spite of the overwatching support for Michael Foster's backbench Bill in the Commons last month.

The legislation has virtually no chance of becoming law. The Government's decision not to find parliamentary time for the legislation has effectively killed off Mr Foster's hopes of being the MP who brought 19 centuries-old tradition to an end. With the Bill destined to perish,

ministers are planning to add an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill that is expected to be in the Queen's Speech next autumn. Ministers are privately resigned to the legislation not being on the statute book until the end of 1999 or beyond.

Mr Foster's Bill faces a long and difficult journey through Parliament. It will go before a committee of MPs where it will be debated line by line. Even ardent anti-hunt Tories such as Alan Clark have condemned the Bill as badly drafted and unworkable.

A handful of Tories, the majority of

whom are implacably opposed to the Bill, could sabotage it during committee stage. Even if it comes to the Commons floor for report stage the opponents could filibuster and effectively kill off the Bill.

The biggest problems would be in the House of Lords where the in-built Conservative majority would seek to destroy the legislation. That would give Tony Blair the perfect backdrop to reform the Lords and remove the voting rights of hereditary peers.

Leading article, page 21



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The Ford Escort was crushed "like a matchbox" by a 60ft tree which workmen, right, removed yesterday



## Falling tree brings storm death toll to 13

80mph 'hurricane' winds have brought death, destruction and power cuts to 40,000 people around the British Isles, reports Russell Jenkins

A FATHER, his daughter and her boyfriend were crushed to death when a tree fell on their car, taking storm to 13. Two other people in the Ford Escort flattened by the huge tree escaped alive from the wreckage.

Gerald Ross, 56, his daughter Ruth, 29, who lived in Gelliger, Gwent, and her boyfriend, David White, 30, were killed on Christmas Day as they made their way home from a party in a nearby village.

Their car was crushed "like a matchbox" by the 60ft tree which toppled in 80mph winds on a country road near Blackwood, Gwent.

Mr Ross was sitting in the front seat of the car next to his

daughter. The other couple, Michael Lewis, 28, and Alma Jones, 27, who were sitting in the back with Mr White, managed to get out of the wreckage of the Ford Fiesta with relatively minor injuries.

Mr Lewis's mother, Linda, said: "It was a terrible tragedy. My son is in a terrible state of shock but he is very lucky to be alive. He and his girlfriend had gone to a party with Ruth and David for Christmas night."

"Ruth's dad said he would drive over at midnight to pick them up. They had a good time but were very tired and looking forward to getting home but the tree just suddenly fell on top of the car. The others had no chance because the trunk fell on them. My son

and his girlfriend were in the back and it missed them by inches."

Meanwhile hundreds of power workers were drafted into black-out trouble spots - notably in Northern Ireland, north Wales and Cheshire - to carry out emergency repairs to pylons and damaged cables as thousands of homes re-

mained without electricity for a second day.

An air and sea search for a missing French trawler lost off the west coast of Wales failed to find any trace of the crew of five.

The rescue operation began on Christmas Eve after an emergency distress beacon was set off on the Toul an Trez



Gerald Ross and his daughter Ruth, who were both killed in the car on Christmas Day, with son Andrew Ross

30 miles west of St David's Head. Coastguards in Swansea said that a rescue helicopter found no trace of a liferaft thought to have been spotted in the area where the trawler vanished.

The work of those engaged in the clean-up operation has been hampered by continuing poor weather conditions but the weathermen said that storms were dying out. The London Weather Centre said there would be some blustery winds in the West and the North and rather cool at 7C to 9C (45-48F) but some areas, especially in the South East, can expect some sunshine today.

A spokesman said: "It will remain rather unsettled but there is nothing on the horizon quite as dramatic as it has been over the past few days."

The miserable Christmas continued for thousands of householders in villages in Anglesey, Caernarfon, Snowdonia and Cheshire who were still without power until late last night. Manweb, which provides power to Merseyside and north Wales, put 500 workers into the field repairing lines damaged by fallen trees and debris.

They were steadily reducing the total number of blacked-out homes from a maximum of 40,000.

Forecast, page 24

## Christmas lunch is blacked out

By Russell Jenkins

IT WILL be remembered in Rob Cramp's household in the holiday village of Rhoscolyn, near Holyhead, as the Christmas when the lights went out.

Mr Cramp, 54, a coastguard officer, his wife Jean, and grown-up sons had to beg a neighbour for space in their gas oven to cook their bird, finally sitting down to Christmas lunch in the evening. The lights had gone out at 6.45pm on Christmas Eve and power was finally restored yesterday afternoon.

"It was a different sort of Christmas, all right," Mr Cramp said. "You couldn't do anything. We were lucky because one of our friends had a gas cooker. We cooked what we could when they had finished. We sat down to eat at around 7pm."

"There was no television. We could not even turn on the radio because we had no batteries. We ended up all

sitting around with a couple of neighbours trying to see the funny side of it all. It will be remembered as a pretty miserable Christmas."

The Cramps were forced to watch helplessly as two freezers full of food began to defrost and perish. "My wife started to get pretty depressed, but she has cheered up now the power is back on," Mr Cramp said. "Thankfully it was quite mild, just miserable. We were lucky because we had a gas fire. We did have heating in one room of the house. Everyone huddled around."

Much of Anglesey, Caernarfon and pockets around Beaumaris and Porthmadog were blacked out during the hurricane-force gales that gathered pace and venom across the Irish Sea. Families made frantic telephone calls to power companies, often to be greeted with the engaged tone or a recorded message.

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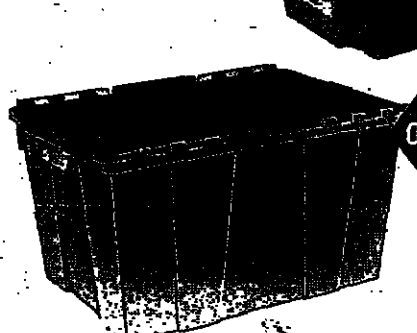
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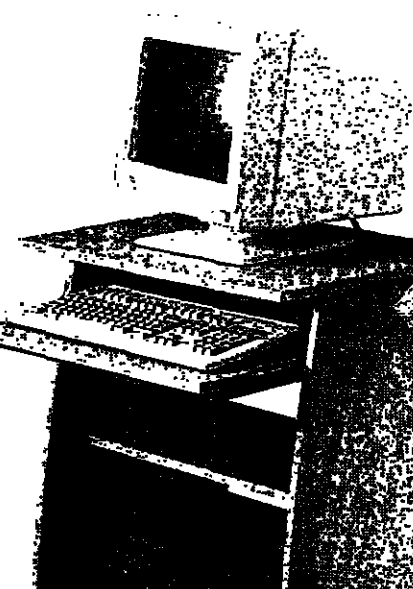


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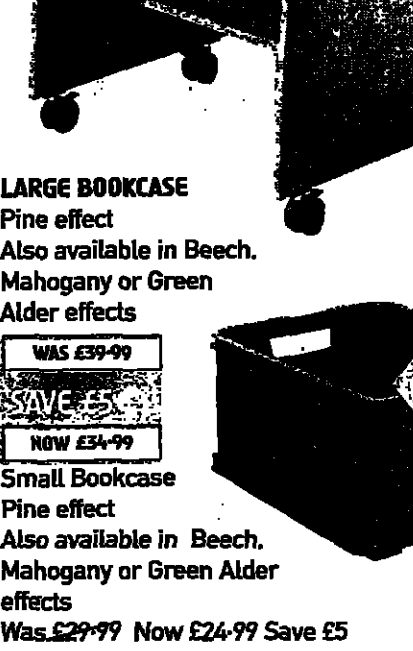


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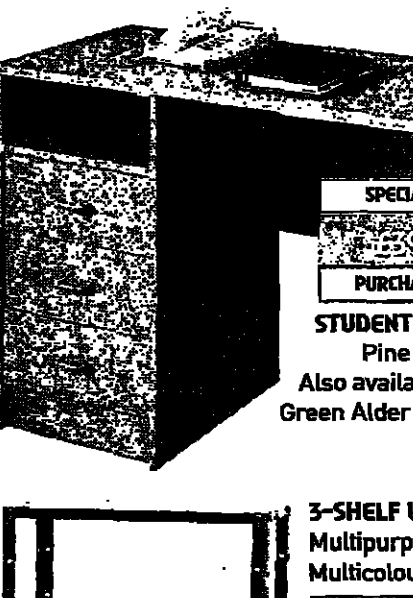
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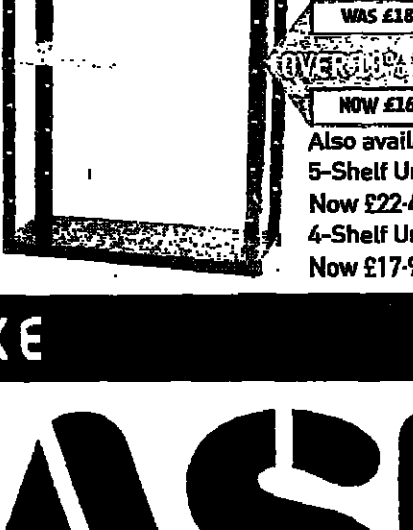


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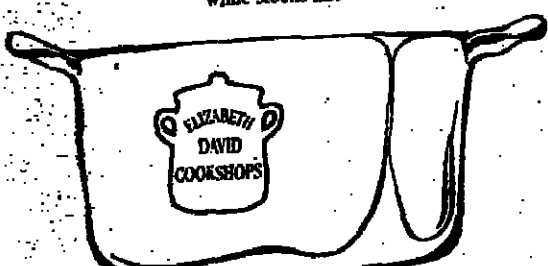
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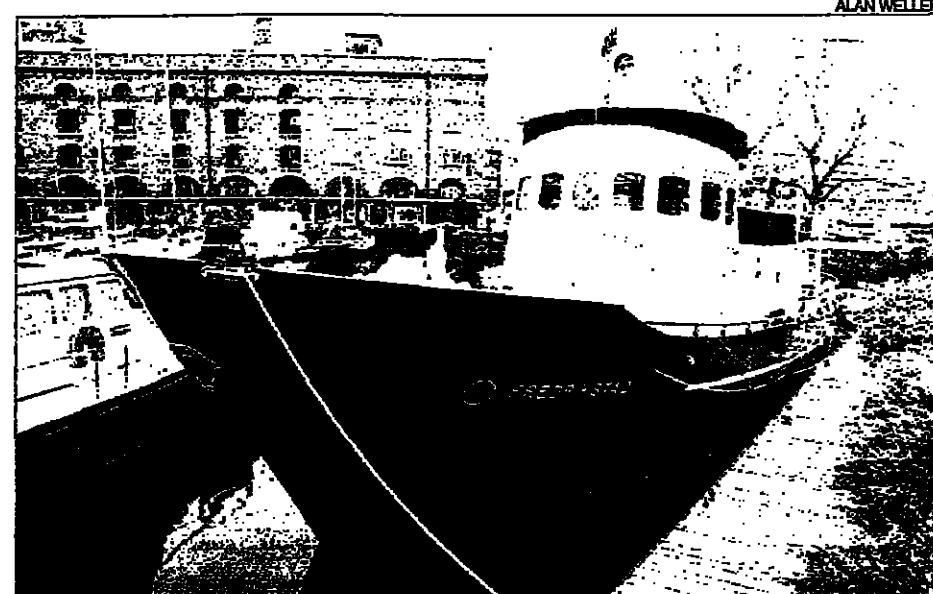




Before: the *Fredrikstad* in her previous incarnation as an Arctic rescue ship

## Forget gin palaces, convert an icebreaker

Simon de Bruxelles sees the latest in 'off-road' ocean-going luxury



After: the converted *Fredrikstad* moored at St Katherine's Dock, East London

THEY are the yacht world's equivalent of the off-road vehicle: former tugs, icebreakers and weather ships converted into go-anywhere vessels in which their owners can explore the backwaters of the world.

Beneath the rough and ready exterior is likely to be an interior fit to grace the most ostentatious floating gin palace. But unlike their flashier counterparts, the super-rich pioneers of the latest trend in yachting would rather not draw attention to themselves.

They steer clear of the crowded marinas of St Tropez, Monaco and Portofino and set sail instead to more exotic destinations where it can be dangerous to attract the wrong sort of attention. Besides the threat from pirates, despots or envious locals, there is always the risk of scratching the paint. A paint job on a superyacht can cost between £2 million and £3.5 million.

John Hughes, a broker who specialises in what he calls the adventure or explorer yachts, said: "If you are skipper of a boat like that, you're not going to risk scratching it or getting the topsides dirty by using a commercial harbour. But if you go to many parts of the world that is the only option available."

"With a former commercial vessel it is not only likely to be far more rugged and seaworthy, it doesn't stick out like a sore thumb."

In the past year at least two ocean-going tugs, a former government weather ship and four Dutch pilot vessels have been bought for conversion into the nautical version of a

custom-built Range Rover. The cost, however, not to mention the astronomical expense of everything from crew to mooring fees, means that even recipients of this year's record City bonuses cruising the Earl's Court Boat Show, which opens on January 9, are likely to find it beyond their means.

Mr Hughes said: "These are the people who own the banks, not the ones who work for them."

"You might get the vessel for £200,000 but then have to spend a couple of million converting it. But you are getting a whole hunk of steel for your money and for a superyacht it's a bargain. These vessels have lots of

interior space to keep the owner's toys as well as plenty of accommodation. There may be a helicopter, a sail boat or a jet-ski inside but no one would ever know it. One I know of has the owner's seaplane in the hold."

A former Norwegian icebreaker that spent her first 20 years with the Norwegian Life Boat Association rescuing trawlers from the ice floes of the Arctic Circle is among the latest conversions. The *Fredrikstad*, now moored at St Katherine's Dock in Wapping, East London, is credited with saving 623 vessels during her career. Her reward was to be completely gutted and transformed with gold fittings, mahogany panelling, television and CD player in every cabin, a Jacuzzi on the foredeck and a price tag of about £2 million.

The shipyard that carried out the work says clients who have ordered similar conversions have subsequently speci-

fied a less glossy paint finish in order not to advertise their wealth unnecessarily.

Jonathan Beckett, the managing director of the brokers Nigel Burgess Ltd, which specialises in the sale and charter of luxury yachts including the *Fredrikstad*, said: "There is a growing market for this sort of 'off-road' vessel, albeit a small one. There is a definite interest in buying the Land Rover or Range Rover type of yacht."

He says it is unlikely there will be any evidence of this trend at the Boat Show. "A

50 ft yacht is a big boat at the Boat Show. But boats like that go on board the sort of vessel we are talking about," he said.

"The idea is you have the level of comfort you require on the inside, with the ruggedness and seaworthiness of the original ship. Usually the buyer purchases the boat then asks a shipyard to refurbish it to their own specification."

"In the eyes of an experienced sailor these boats have a beauty of their own. One can appreciate them as one would appreciate the qualities of a Land Rover and, in very bad

seas, the extreme seaworthiness. They are, of course, particularly suited to visiting some of the less hospitable areas of the world."

Millionaire ship owners who want to get away from the crowds are being forced to become more adventurous. Mr Hughes said: "Several large yachts have gone up the Amazon recently and others have gone off to Antarctica or into the Arctic circle."

"They might look rather rough and ready but they will take anything the sea can throw at them and all the

equipment, such as the diesel engines, is massive and will last for ever."

The *Fredrikstad*'s transformation from rusty tub to multimillionaire's bath toy was undertaken by the Penzance Dry Dock in Cornwall, owned by the businessman Peter de Savary.

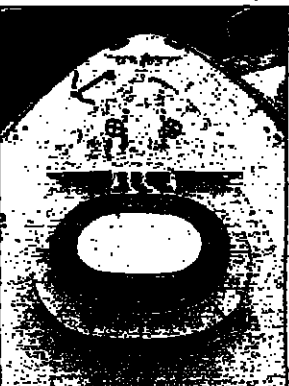
The 16-month operation involved completely stripping out the hull and refitting the 75 ft vessel. Three guest cabins are equipped with en suite tiled bathrooms, leather upholstery, antique decor and mahogany panelling, while

the latest electronic equipment has been installed on the bridge. She can carry eight guests and four crew at a sedate 12 knots for 3,000 miles without refuelling.

Marketing manager Clare Whitney said: "It's about as luxurious as you can get, certainly as luxurious as any floating gin palace but with much more character. It's also a harder craft which will appeal to owners who want to go exploring, rather than simply floating in the Mediterranean or the Caribbean. A big white gin palace attracts a lot

of attention and, if you're moored off the coast of a Third World country, that attention might not be completely friendly."

"With a more commercial, rugged appearance the money spent on the yacht is less obvious, more discreet. Obviously the luxury cruisers have not lost their appeal but there is a move towards more conversions of older vessels. We're finding more and more people are looking for less opulent finish on the outside and 150 per cent luxury on the inside."



The foredeck of the *Fredrikstad* with Jacuzzi, left, and the leather and mahogany on the bridge



Beneath the commercial-seeming exterior are all the comforts, including this opulent dining room

### PLAYING SAFE

Dressing down is advisable if you want to avoid being mugged in the more dangerous backwaters of the world's oceans, according to Lloyd's of London, the maritime insurers (Peter Rafter writes).

The trend among millionaires for converting unassuming-looking tugs and cargo boats into luxury cruisers reflects an increasing risk from piracy. The piracy black spots include the coasts around Indonesia, the Philippines, Brazil, the Gulf of Thailand and Tanzania. Worst of all, says Lloyd's, is the South China Sea.

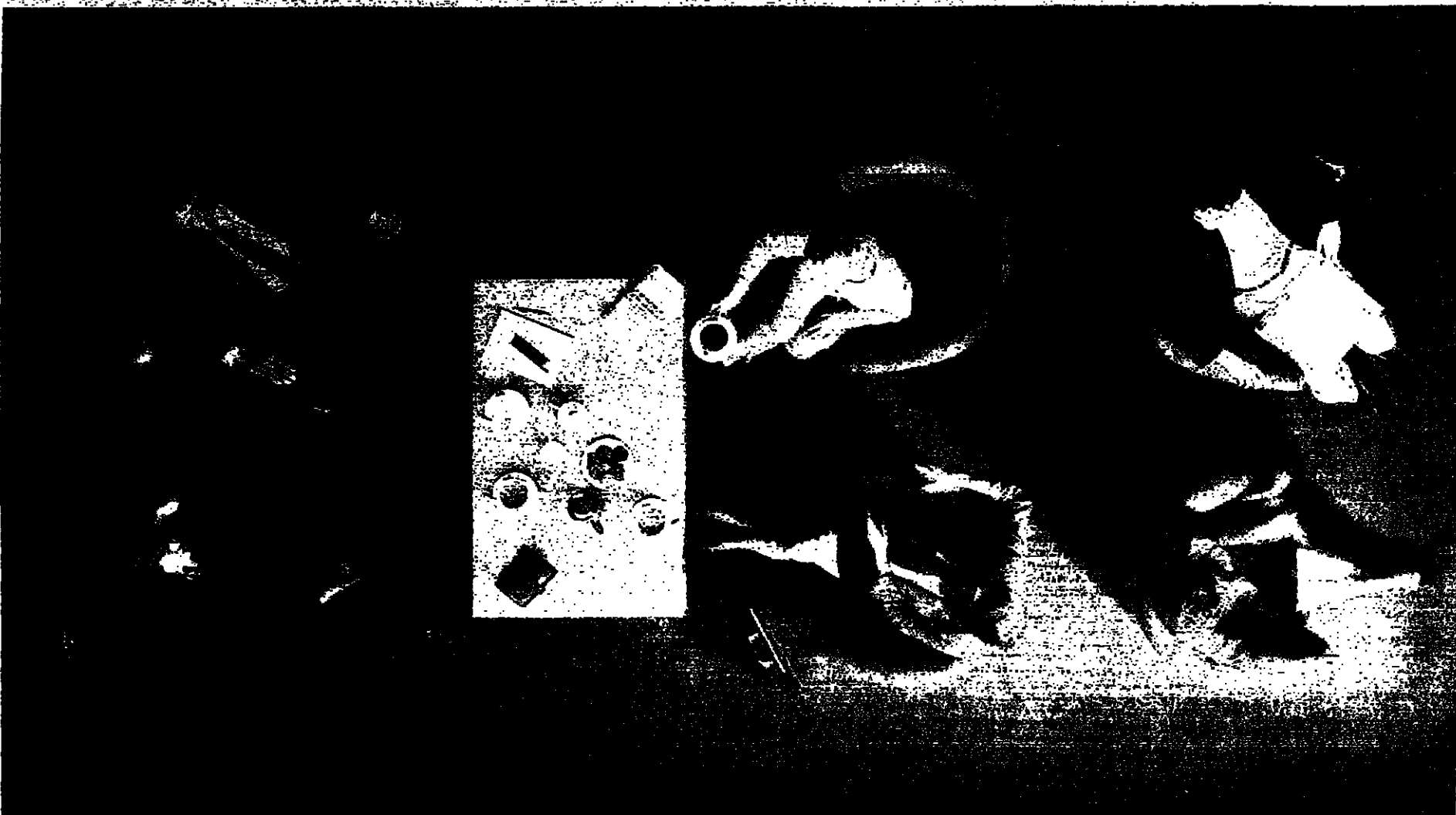
The International Maritime Bureau, which advises Lloyd's and monitors piracy levels, says the trend is on the increase. More than 40 people were reported killed by pirates in the first nine months of 1997.

compared with 26 for the same period last year.

The bureau believes that the true number of attacks is much higher than recorded statistics show. Many yacht owners are wealthy and secretive, a bureau spokesman said, and are therefore reluctant to report attacks for fear of expensive and probing police investigations.

Pirates use stealth and the cover of darkness to board vessels before crew members can react. "They steal the cargo or the crew's valuables, usually emptying the master's safe on the way," the spokesman said.

Although the bureau does not recommend it, some ship owners have taken to carrying guns to defend themselves. This has caused problems with local customs forces which enforce a wide variety of firearms laws.



Is this room really travelling at sixty miles an hour?

"Would you like another top-up?", our congenial host enquired.

Smiling, I held out my near-empty coffee cup across the table.

Sitting face to face also allowed the conversation to continually flow as the Mercedes V-class effortlessly wended its way toward our destination. Stretching out, I had to remind myself that our luggage was securely stored behind us.

From the corner of an eye, I noticed the verdant scenery blur by like the brushstrokes of an impressionist painting.

Although, if truth be told, the whole experience seemed slightly more surreal. After all, who has ever heard of a room travelling along at a steady sixty miles an hour?

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# Versailles of Italy will rise to new glory

'Lost domain'  
to be restored  
as monarchy  
prepares for  
return, writes  
Richard Owen

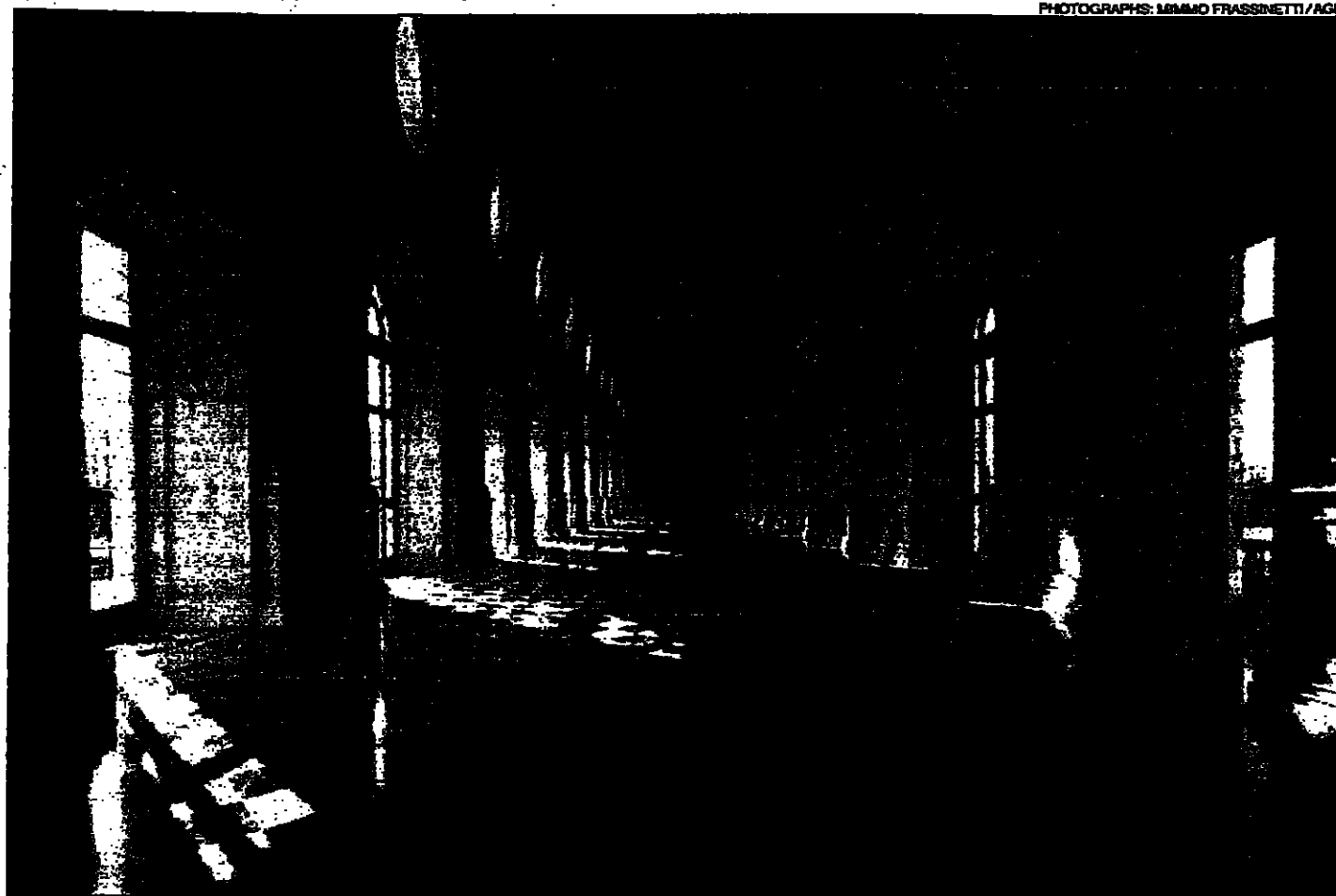
**V**enaria, the Versailles of Italy and a royal "lost domain", is to be restored after years of ruin and neglect, coinciding with the expected return next year of the country's exiled royal family, the Savoy.

This month the lower house of the Italian parliament voted in a racy debate to give a first reading to a Bill opening the way for the return of Victor Emmanuel, the 60-year-old heir to the throne. Victor Emmanuel, son of Italy's last King, Umberto II, left Italy as a boy of nine in 1946 after a hotly contested referendum narrowly voted to abolish the monarchy, which many Italians felt to be tainted by association with Mussolini.

There is no chance of a restoration. But although Victor Emmanuel is prone to gaffes — he appeared recently to defend Mussolini's treatment of the Jews and had to backtrack hastily — few Italians oppose his return and there is growing interest in the Savoy legacy. The Bill would amend Italy's Constitution, which a present bans all male members of the House of Savoy from setting foot on Italian soil. Next year it will go to the Senate and then back to the lower house for a final reading when an absolute majority is needed for it to pass.

The Bill is opposed by the Communists, on whom the centre-left Government of Professor Romano Prodi normally depends for its majority. But the centre-right Opposition supports the Bill and Signor Prodi has indicated that if it fails, he will hold a referendum on allowing the Savoy to return from exile in Switzerland after half a century.

The present members of the House of Savoy — Victor Emmanuel, his wife Maria Doria and their son, Emmanuel Filiberto — will not be allowed to take part in politics when they return or to seek to regain



The Gallery of Diana at Venaria, left, which is almost 300ft long and is part of the restoration project and, above right, one of the royal bedrooms in what was conceived as a hunting lodge



The Sant'Uberto chapel, which forms part of the Venaria complex



former royal properties. Nonetheless, the restoration of Venaria, near Turin, is seen as a symbol of the reconciliation between the former monarchy and the Italian people, with the Ministry of Culture, headed by Walter Veltroni, the Deputy Prime Minister and a former Communist, contributing more than £20 million to the cost.

The Savoy ruled Piedmont, first as dukes and later as kings, from the 11th century, making Turin their capital in 1574. They gained royal status in 1713 and soon after acquired Sardinia. In the 19th century the Savoy supported Garibaldi's struggle for Italian unification, with Victor Emmanuel II becoming the first King of Italy in 1860, and Turin serving briefly as the national capital.

Consciously modelled on Versailles, Venaria was conceived as a hunting lodge and estate by Duke Carlo Emanuele II in the 17th century. The duke was not noted for his military prowess — his forces suffered an ignominious de-



Veltroni, left, Victor Emmanuel and Prodi

feat while trying to conquer Genoa in 1672 — but the glory that eluded him on the battlefield came instead in the field of architecture. He founded the baroque centre of Turin and in 1663 commissioned the architect Amedeo di Castellamonte to transform the village of Alessandria Superiore near Turin into a "new royal town".

The project was not popular with the Piedmontese, who had to pay for it in taxes. But the result was a magnificent palazzo, with frescoes dedicated to Diana, goddess of hunting, and gardens with fountains, grottoes, an orangery, an open-air theatre and a fish-

pond "500 paces long", as well as areas for rearing pheasants and training horses. The "Italian Versailles" became one of the sights of Europe and was expanded further by Carlo Emmanuel's son, Victor Amedeo II, who became the first Piedmontese King under the Treaty of Utrecht.

Victor Amedeo employed Filippo Juvarra, the Sicilian-born architect who designed many of Turin's baroque piazzas and palazzos, to remodel the Gallery of Diana at Venaria. Juvarra also built a chapel at Venaria to St Hubert (Sant'Uberto), the 8th-century bishop who, while hunting in



A general view of Venaria, the royal hunting lodge of the House of Savoy

the Ardennes, is said to have seen a vision of Christ crucified between the antlers of a stag, making him the patron saint of hunting.

Venaria was badly damaged in the 18th-century wars with France and by the 19th century the Savoy had abandoned it for Stupinigi, their rococo hunting lodge (another design by Filippo Juvarra) west of Turin. Venaria declined, serving as a barracks during the First and Second World Wars, with its once splendid rooms and arcades used as munitions depots.

In 1943, the year Italy surrendered, local people broke in and stripped the palace of its remaining furnishings, even carrying off doors and floorboards.

Francesco Pernice, the architect in charge of restoration for the Piedmont Superinten-

dency of Fine Arts, said that although the State had begun restoration of the complex in 1961, only £6 million had been put aside for the project. "We need at least ten times that," he told *La Repubblica*. "We are dealing with 45,000 square metres, much of it in a ruinous state."

Signor Veltroni has promised a further £15 million over the next three years and the European Commission has allocated EU funding. This month Unesco listed the former Savoy residences in Italy as World Heritage sites.

"We plan to make Venaria into a museum to the Savoy," Signor Pernice said. "They are part of Italian and Piedmontese history." There are also plans to convert part of the estate into a permanent art restoration workshop and to develop the grounds for tennis, golf and riding. The move comes after the restoration last month of the Palazzo Carignano in Turin, where the first parliament of a unified Italy sat until Rome became the capital.

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Offers valid from 1st January 1998. Valid for travel between 8th January and 15th March 1998 and must include a Saturday night stay. Prices shown are from London. Some routes are via Amsterdam. A supplement of up to £10 may be charged on routes to Amsterdam and Paris for flights during Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Prices are subject to availability, restrictions and airport tax.

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مركز الامم

## Corporate wives' find champion in the gender war

THE corporate wife who won a £2 million (£13.2 million) out of settlement after being "hit" by her husband has played into a second career as feminist activist. Lorna Whit is using some of the money from her celebrated divorce to fund a pressure group called the "Foundation for Equality in Marriage".

At marrying her high-

### JAMES BONE'S NEW YORK



school sweetheart, Gary Wendt, Mrs Wendt spent 32 years serving as a dutiful wife as he climbed the corporate ladder to become chairman and chief executive of GE Capital, the most profitable division of one of the world's largest corporations. Not only did she cook, clean and raise the couple's two children, but she also hosted corporate din-

ner parties, made small-talk with foreign dignitaries and attended charity events on her husband's arm. When the two split up, she rejected an \$8 million settlement offer and sued for a fairer share. The judge awarded her half Mr Wendt's declared assets of \$45 million, but Mrs Wendt still wants a cut of his pension and stock options and is due back in court on Monday. The board of her foundation, which convened for the first time in New York this month, includes Mrs Wendt's lawyers and her two daughters, Sarah and Rachel, as well as the feminist academics Myra Strober, of Stanford University, and Martha Fineman, of Columbia University.

NEWSWEEK chose a portrait of Diana, Princess of Wales, left, as the cover for its annual "pictures of the year" edition. The computer-generated image—the work of Robert Silvers, 29, a graphic artist—was compiled from hundreds of other photographs. Earlier, he assembled the "Marilyn Monroe" cover for the sixtieth anniversary edition of Life magazine, using previous Life covers.



Kate Shindle, Miss America 1997, who caused outrage when she suggested that schoolchildren should be given condoms as part of safe sex education



Ramona: 1944 winner

### Aids leads to catfight on catwalk

A SPAT between past and present Miss Americas is ruffling hairdos in the swimsuit set.

Kate Shindle won this year's tiara in September. But becoming a beauty queen in America these days is more like a sociology examination than the old-fashioned catwalk and Miss Shindle, 20, had also to come up with a "platform".

She chose what seemed like a safe bet: Aids awareness. No sooner was the sash around her shapely torso, however, than the controversy began. Miss Shindle's sin was to suggest that, in the interest of "safe sex", children should be given condoms in school.

Her speech provoked outrage from the 1944 Miss America, Venus Ramona, who said: "I come from an era when we had a name for girls who had our condoms, and it wasn't Miss America."

### Actors take Broadway flop on to the street

THE co-stars of the musical *Side Show* can claim to have played Broadway like no one else. Emily Skinner and Alice Ripley have been spotted at Times Square, begging the street-goers to see their production. The show is just not pulling in the crowds and the final curtain is due to fall next week after just 91 performances. The fiasco will cost investors more than \$7 million (£4 million)—the third largest financial flop in Broadway history.

□ The caretaker who found Andrew Cunanan, Gianni Versace's killer, is marketing his own brand of holster. Fernando Carreira, who discovered Cunanan on a Miami houseboat, says he had trouble drawing his gun and wants to be ready next time.

□ John F. Kennedy's personal effects are to be auctioned in Manhattan on March 18 and already the question is: will they fetch more than the \$34.5 million (£20.3 million) raised by Jackie's memorabilia last year?

□ A technological innovation in the age-old dating game: the "Dear John" fax. "I didn't want to call him to tell him not to call, so I faxed him," an up-to-date friend reports.

## Senfeld kills off his cult TV comedy

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

AMERICANS have begun a nationwide lament after Jerry Seinfeld, creator and star of the television comedy that bears his name, announced he will kill the show at the end of the current, ninth season.

Seinfeld has been the most acclaimed television comedy of the decade, its cult status more than matching that of such yearly hits as *I Love Lucy*, *M.A.S.H.* and *Cheers*. It has reinvented the same heights of Britain, but its BBC2 air attracts a healthy audience.

Interviewed in *The New York Times* yesterday, Mr Seinfeld said: "I wanted to end the show the same kind of peak we've been doing it on for years. We've all seen a million series where you say, 'I wish they didn't do those last years'. For me, this is all at timing. My life is all at timing. As a comedian, sense of timing is everything."

Describe commonly as being about nothing in particular, Seinfeld offers weekly vignettes from the lives of

four morally anaemic, intellectually mediocre and physically unimpressive New Yorkers. Mr Seinfeld is Jerry—the lucky one of the dysfunctional quartet, who also includes Elaine, a feckless man-chaser; George, the short, bald "loser"; and Kramer, a man who is, to put it bluntly, nuts.

Yet their comic brew is a heady one. Seinfeld's worth to the network can be seen in the actor's astronomical salary. Mr Seinfeld receives at least \$1 million (£606,000) an episode—his \$2.2 million season—and his co-stars get \$600,000.

The comedy is expected to make almost \$1 billion in syndication revenues. All this has made Mr Seinfeld one of New York's richest men and *Fortune* magazine estimated recently that his income for 1997 was \$94 million.

He could have made even more next year. NBC is said to have offered him \$5 million an episode to stay in production. But he said: "This show has been the greatest love affair of my life. We all felt we wanted to leave in love."

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# Teargas fired in clash at Moi election meeting

FROM DAVID ORR  
IN NAIROBI

TEARGAS was fired by police at an election rally in Kenya yesterday after supporters of rival parties clashed.

The trouble broke out as President Moi was leaving Homa Bay where he had addressed about a thousand people. He and other candidates in Monday's presidential and parliamentary elections have been criss-crossing the country trying to muster last-minute support.

Fighting is said to have started when some people refused to give the salute of the President's ruling party. The salute, arm held aloft with a raised index finger, is given to indicate that Kibaki is the one and only party, which it is until multiparty politics were introduced in 1991.

The dissenters are understood to have been followers of the National Democratic Party (NDP) of Raila Odinga, one

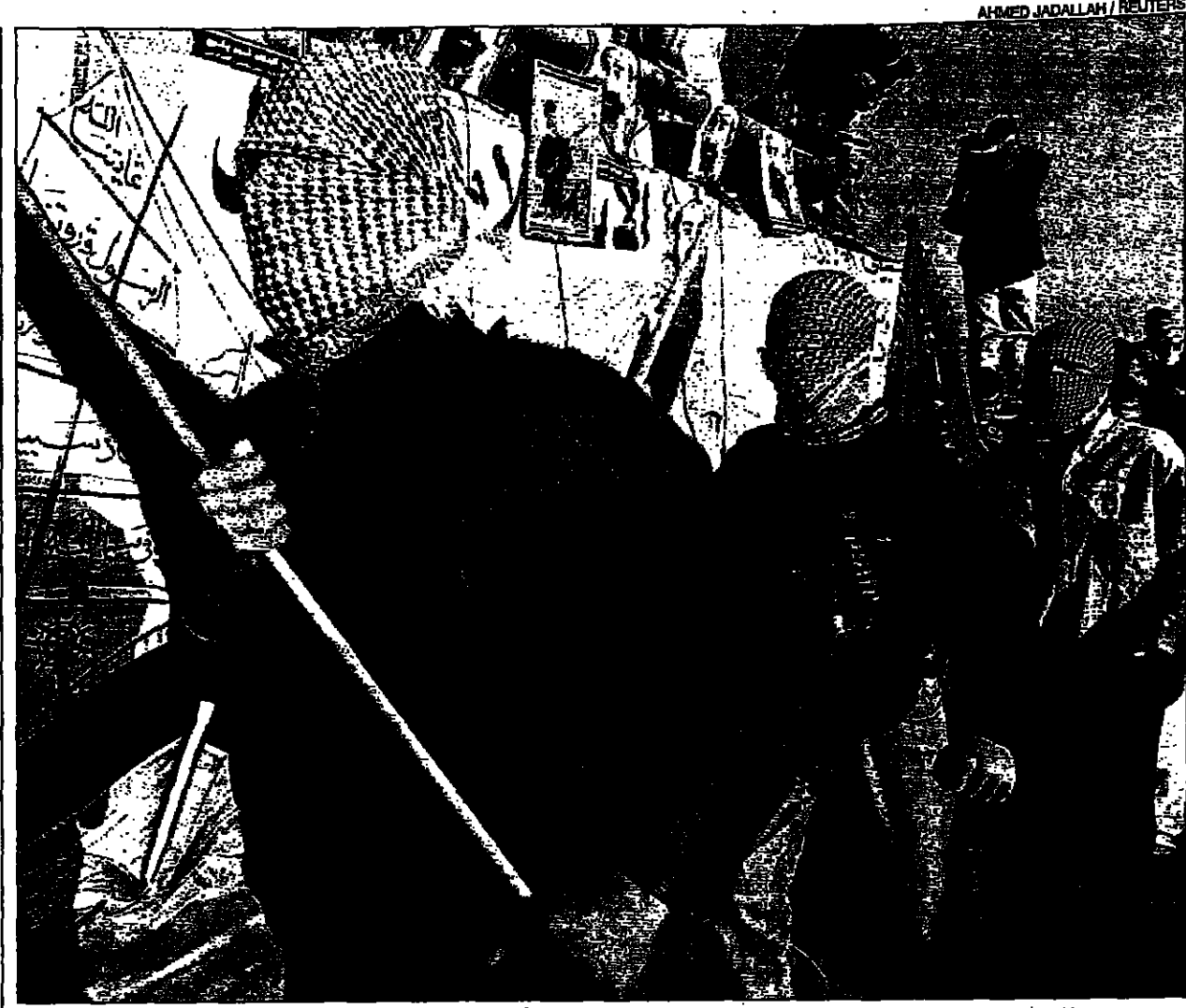


Moi: battle for votes

among other things, exclude circumcision, the Luo have as much difficulty finding acceptance among the President's minority Kalenjin tribe as they do among the dominant Kikuyu community.

Despite the lip-service paid by politicians to the idea of plurality, tribal issues continue to dominate Kenyan politics. Each party has its own particular ethnic identity, although Kibaki draws its followers from a wider tribal spectrum than most of the other parties.

In another incident on the shores of Lake Victoria, police fired teargas yesterday to disperse about 200 Kibaki supporters demonstrating against the murder of a party candidate, Othman Othman, a candidate in local elections also taking place on Monday. It is rumoured that he was killed for having failed to distribute enough of his election funds among local people.



Masked Palestinians belonging to Hamas march during a Gaza Strip rally marking the tenth anniversary of the Islamic Resistance Movement's foundation by Sheikh Ahmed Yaseen at the start of the intifada

## Pressure on Israel to return more laid

FROM ROSS DUN  
IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL'S Foreign Minister has said that the Palestinians must be given at least another 10 per cent of the West Bank to keep the peace process alive.

David Levy's comments came after a meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister, who is under pressure from the US Administration to transfer a significant amount of territory to Palestinian self-rule.

The Israeli Cabinet which meets tomorrow, is expected to decide the issue so, with Mr Netanyahu due to hold talks with President Clinton at the White House next month.

Jerusalem: Israel police said yesterday that they were holding two Jewish extremists, Avigdor Esh and Haim Pakovich, who were suspected of plotting to throw a pig's head in an Islamic shrine in east Jerusalem to spark clashes between Arabs and Jews during Ramadan. (Reuters)

## Spy in the sky is high-tech aid for nosy neighbours

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

WITHIN a few weeks, it will take only a credit card to order pictures from space of secret military bases, or even the next-door neighbour's garden.

The first civilian spy satellite has been successfully put into orbit by an American company using a former Cold War missile launched from the Svobodnyy Cosmodrome in eastern Russia.

The first signals were received at a ground station in Norway, confirming that the Earthwatch satellite had begun operations. It should be ready to start taking orders by February. The cost: £180 to £440 per picture, depending on whether they come from the satellite's normal output or are specially ordered.

Earlybird breaks the monopoly on high-resolution satellite reconnaissance pictures held by the military and intelligence services of a handful of advanced countries for the past 40 years. The Clinton Administration approved the idea three years ago to give American aerospace companies a head start over foreign rivals.

Now almost anyone can take a peek from space. They include foreign governments that cannot afford their own satellites, although the opera-



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## Santa carries relief to children of Iraq

Nicosia: An aircraft chartered by Peace 2000 Icelandic charity, and with Father Christmas on board, led in Iraq bringing Christmas gifts and medicine for Iraqi children hit by United Nations sanctions (Michael Theodorou reports).

The flight was permitted only after the charity pressed the UN sanctions committee in New York that Santa carried no gifts for President Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader. The flight, to a country where UNicef recently estimated that nearly a million children are malnourished, was the second 14-hour. A Russian plane touched down at Baghdad on Christmas Day.

## Japan party is disbanded

Tokyo: Ichiro Ozawa, the leader of Japan's three-year-old New Frontier Party, the main opposition group with members in the 252-seat upper house and 126 in the more powerful 500-seat House of Representatives, announced the dissolution of the party.

Sources said that Mr Ozawa and 100 parliamentarians planned to form a new party early next month. Other NFP parliamentarians are said to be planning to band together to form several new parties. (Reuters)

## 6,000 Kurds killed in 197

Diyarbakir: Turkish security officials said that the Armed Forces had killed almost 6,000 Kurdish guerrillas in 1997. In all, 5,974 Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels had been killed for the loss of 548 policemen, soldiers and "large group" militiamen, Aydin Arslan, the emergency rule region governor, said. Another 142 civilians had also died in fighting. A military source said security forces had killed nine rebels in the latest report of fighting. (Reuters)

## Jewish graves desecrated

Buenos Aires: Vandals smashed more than 30 tombs and monuments in La Tablada Jewish cemetery here Christmas Eve for the second year running, defiling photos of the dead. Argentina, home to a large Jewish community, has suffered two bloody and unsolved attacks in the five years. A bomb destroyed the Israeli embassy, killing 29 people, and an explosion razed a community centre, killing 86. (Reuters)

## Car hazard for penguins

Cape Town: At least four jackass penguins have been run over and killed by cars during the Christmas rush at a busy African beach resort, apparently because the birds hide under vehicles for shade. Nature conservation authorities were warning out tourists at Boulders beach, south of here, to warn penguin tourists to check under cars before driving off. (Reuters)



# Chubais at risk as Yeltsin turns on reformers

PRESIDENT Yeltsin yesterday attacked the liberal reformers inside his administration, comparing them to their Communist predecessors and hinting that they may be purged from the ranks of his Government.

In a populist statement during his final radio address before the traditional holiday begins at the new year, the Kremlin leader signalled again that he may slow the process of economic reform because of the hardships endured by his people. "Today it has become clear for most people that there have been few (economic) achievements," he said, adding that ministerial heads could roll. "We will correct mistakes and draw the necessary conclusions."

The remarks came as Mr Yeltsin is courting the opposition-dominated Duma, the lower house of parliament, and increasingly is working towards consensus politics with Communists and nationalists at the expense of his pro-Western supporters.

Last week, for instance, he surprised many of his countrymen by praising the role of the KGB in Russian history and suggesting that past criticisms had been unfair. Yesterday, he suggested in a meeting with leading politicians, including Gennadi Seleznyov, the Communist Speaker of the Duma, that he was prepared to dilute a Bill to privatise land, once a cornerstone of his policy.

Although potentially harmful for the economy, the tactic of switching course has been employed repeatedly by Mr

The President may be ready for a purge, writes Richard Beeston

Yeltsin to keep him in power and his adversaries and allies off balance. The obvious target of his latest attack was Anatoli Chubais, the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for much of the reform process, who has become a hate figure for millions impoverished during the chaotic transition to the free market.

Although he has been one of the most influential and powerful figures in the country over the past two years, his authority was badly weakened after allegations that he and



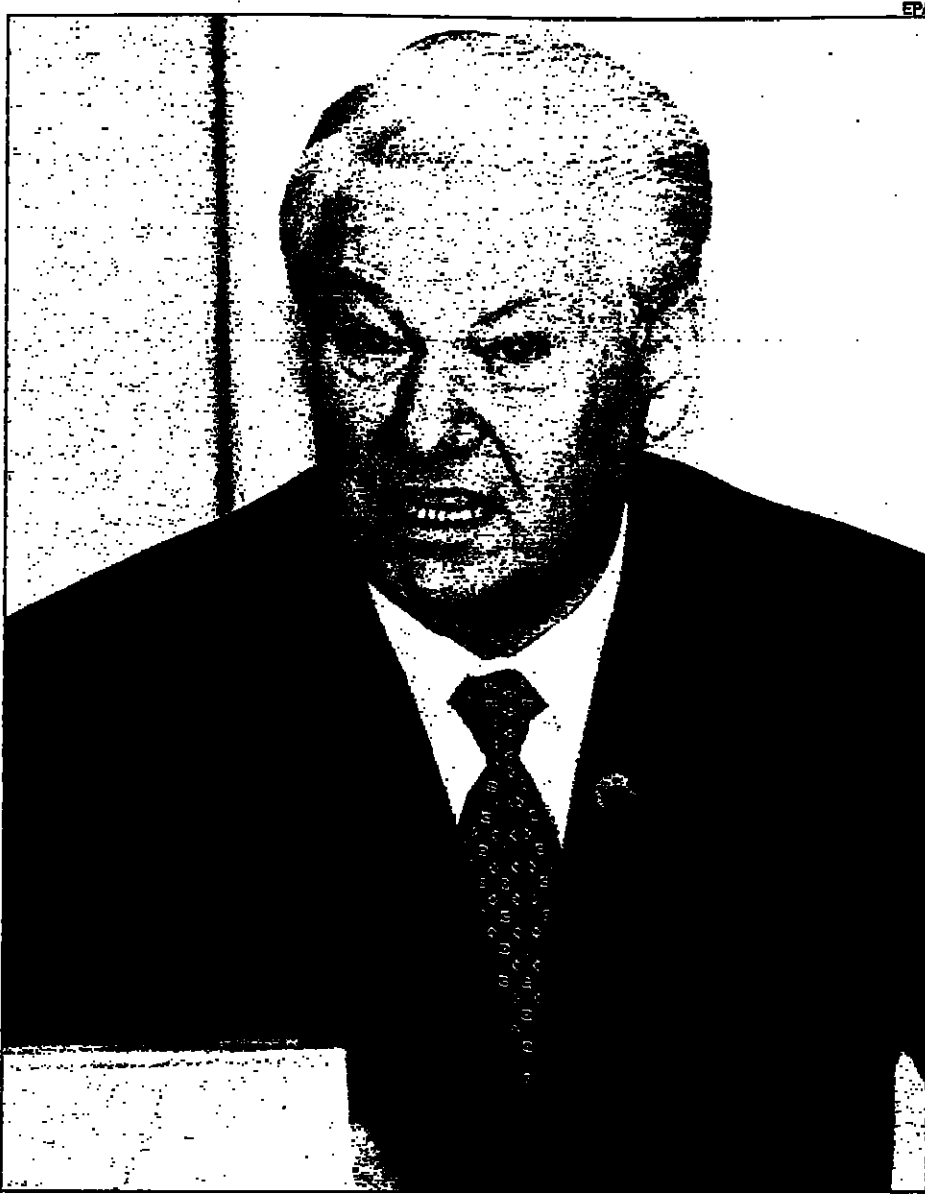
Chubais: head may roll

four associates accepted unusually high advances for an unwritten book. The co-authors were all dismissed and Mr Chubais was demoted and reprimanded.

On Wednesday, a defected Mr Chubais told a Moscow newspaper that he would soon decide whether to resign from his job, although Mr Yeltsin suggested that the decision may be made for him sooner than he expects. "[Communist] Party slogans have been replaced by macroeconomic ones," the Kremlin leader said, in an apparent deviation from his own repeated belief in the need to create a market economy. "They first proclaimed 'Privatisation at any cost' and later 'Let's squeeze the dollar into a currency corridor'."

Another possible victim is Boris Nemtsov, a young Deputy Prime Minister, whom Mr Yeltsin admonished in public on Wednesday for not resolving the vexed question of wages unpaid to millions of workers. Sensing blood, the Duma passed a motion yesterday calling for the charismatic young minister to be sacked after he allegedly suggested during a recent visit to Sweden that Westerners preferred investing in Russian regions run by democrats rather than by communists.

If Mr Yeltsin makes good his threats and warnings to the reformers in his Government, the coming year could start with a political and economic crisis as the country slows its gradual move towards the free market and the



President Yeltsin at a Kremlin meeting yesterday. He may slow economic reforms

Kremlin sheds its reformers. Certainly, the many Russians who look to the predictions of astrologers for guidance about the course of the coming year are convinced that the nation is destined for a shake-up in politics and more uncertainty over the President's health.

Although he looked and sounded much fitter yesterday, Mr Yeltsin, according to Pavel Glova, one of Russia's leading astrologers, is destined for another serious ail-

ment in March or April. The astrologer also said that a number of ministers, including Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, may be replaced and that Russia's future leader will be young, tall and fair-haired.

□ **Greenpeace arrests:** Eight members of Greenpeace were arrested yesterday when they climbed on to the Nuclear Power Ministry building in Moscow to protest against a plan to build four new nuclear

reactors. The activists climbed onto the building to stretch out a huge banner reading "Stop Nuclear Piracy in Sosnovy Bor", a reference to a nuclear plant near St Petersburg where one of the new reactors is to be built.

Police officers arrested eight activists, including a German and an Austrian, on charges of holding an unsanctioned rally. Yevgeni Usov, a campaign organizer for Greenpeace in Russia, said. (AP)

# Far Right split on race after Le Pen is fined

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

MINIMISING the Holocaust cost Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of France's National Front, a heavy fine yesterday in a legal hearing of significance for both his party and mainstream French politics.

M Le Pen was ordered to pay Fr300,000 for describing Nazi gas chambers as a "detail" in the history of the Second World War. A court in Nanterre, on the outskirts of Paris, said that the fine would pay for its judgment to be published in 15 national newspapers and magazines. French anti-racist organisations called the decision magnificent.

Under a 1990 law introduced largely to try to curb his frequent racist comments, it is an offence in France to "contest crimes against humanity". M Le Pen appeared to do just that earlier this month when visiting his German counterpart, Franz Schönerhuber, a former SS officer.

Speaking in Munich, he said: "In a book of 1,000 pages on World War Two, the gas chambers take up ten to 15 lines. That is a detail." The remark caused widespread outrage in France. He has already been fined Fr100,000 for making a similar statement in 1987.

Yesterday he used the court case to repeat a favourite theme, a claim that France's "corrupt" mainstream party politicians have united to exclude the National Front from power. "I have been charged with a political offence," he said.

The National Front leader knew that he would earn particular condemnation for speaking out during the trial of Maurice Papon, the former

Vichy civil servant accused of participating in the deportation of Jews to Nazi concentration camps. That case has focused attention on the French war role, creating unease among a section of the population. His comment came on the day President Chirac said that France should assume responsibility for its collaboration with Hitler's Germany.

However, M Le Pen's outburst provoked anger among some of his allies, illustrating a growing rift within the ultra-right party. After more than a decade of almost non-stop success, which culminated when M Le Pen polled 15 per cent in the 1995 presidential elections, the movement is at a crossroads.

Its leader would like to continue in a vein marked by his outspoken attacks on immigrants. Yet some lieutenants want him to tone down the racism in the hope of striking alliances with mainstream right-wing parties. The issue is likely to determine the shape of French politics for years to come.



Le Pen: Holocaust jibe

## Mafia son shoots to film fame

PALERMO: A Mafia son turned film director has made a his first feature film about rival Mafia families. (Francesco Bongarra writes)

Giuseppe Greco, 47, known as Giorgio Castellani, who directed the film *Il Grimaldi*, is the son of Michele Greco, nicknamed "the Pope", the Mafia boss presently serving a series of life sentences.

*Il Grimaldi* was shot in Sicily on a low budget. It focuses on the changing values between old "ethical" Mafia families and their young rivals.

## Divorce reforms in France raise storm

BY ADAM SAGE

A POLITICAL storm was brewing in France yesterday over government plans to simplify divorce with a cheap procedure in which the town hall would replace lawyers and judges.

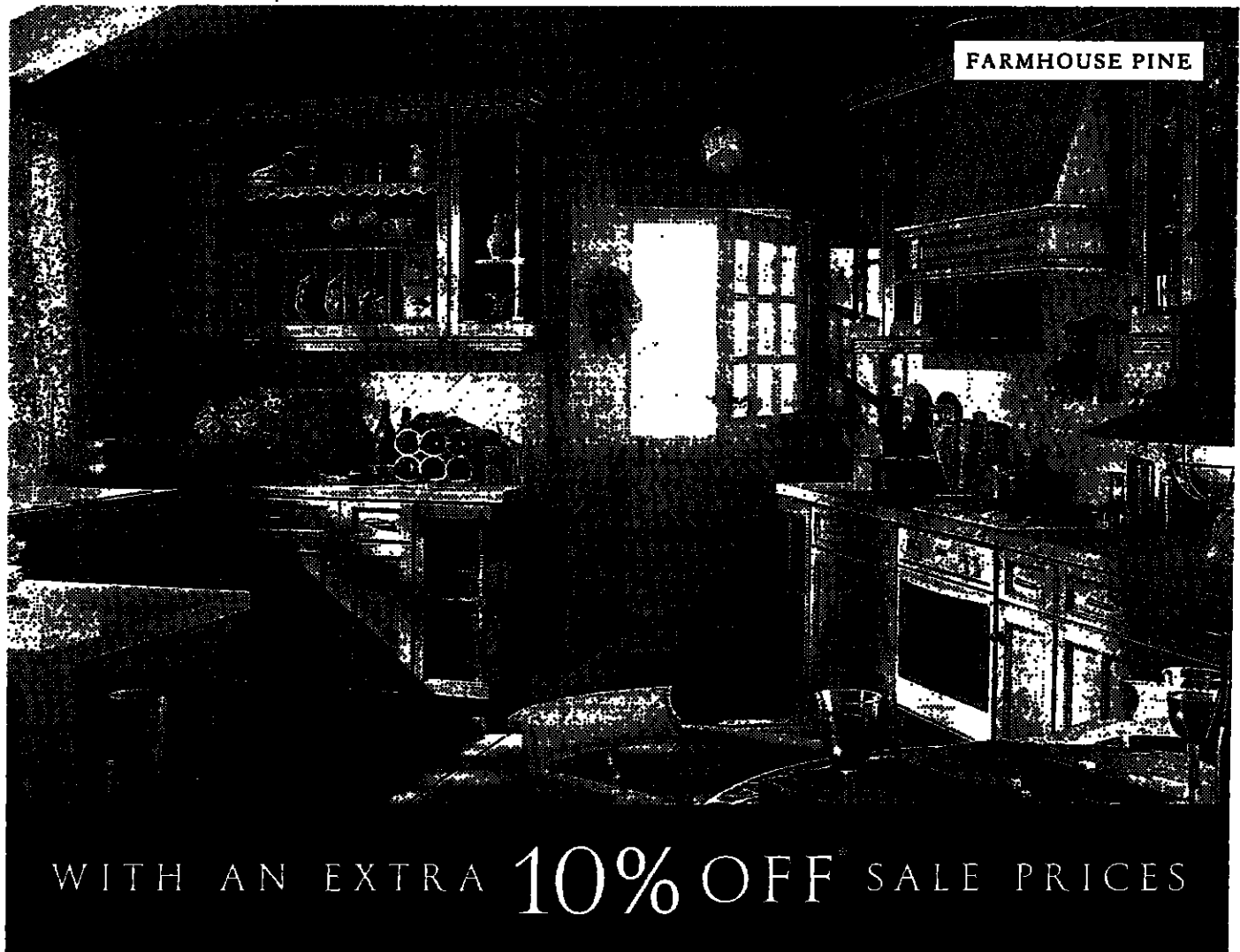
Elisabeth Guigou, the Socialist Minister of Justice, wants to offer couples the chance to end their marriage through an agreement witnessed and ratified by their mayor. Her proposal is backed by 70 per cent of French people, according to a recent opinion poll, but has met opposition from centre-right politicians and Catholic family associations.

The present system is costly,

with legal fees running to a minimum of Fr1,500 (£750), even where couples agree on all the issues, according to a recent survey. It can also prove lengthy. Couples are legally obliged to wait three months after giving notice of their desire to separate, but overworked judges take many more months to rubberstamp the decision.

Pro-family associations say the proposed changes would weaken marriages, while lawyers say it would create a "second-class citizen", with the rich using advocates to settle their disagreements and the poor having to be satisfied with town hall officials.

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# Forces turn to nature for combat gear

Michael Evans reports on the use of plants to keep out the weather - and antlers to keep out the bullets

THE British soldier of the 21st century will be protected from enemy fire and the elements with the help of revolutionary materials modelled on nature's defence systems.

The application of nature's smarter ideas to military equipment has so intrigued the Ministry of Defence that it has awarded special contracts to the centre for biomimetics - the science of mimicking nature's best designs - at Reading University to study the possible applications of plants, animals and even insects.

It is intended that, by 2010, every combat soldier will have only three layers of clothing, instead of the present seven, to

cater for all types of weather conditions. To that end, Julian Vincent, a biologist, and George Jeronimidis, a composite materials engineer, co-directors of the five-year-old centre, are examining the way plants cope with different climatic conditions.

"Plants have a very effective mechanism for moving water out, including leaves that have holes which open and close," Dr Vincent said. "Plants don't walk around and they don't have brains, so they are much simpler than animals to study. They can move certain bits and they can control their temperature. There are a lot of good ideas that come out of plants which may provide the

solution for combat clothing of the future."

The researchers are also looking at pine cones because they have a simple and reliable way of responding to changing humidity. As atmospheric humidity drops, the scales open, and vice versa. What is planned is an artificial fibre system based on the mechanism of the pine cone. If the centre for biomimetics succeeds, the revolutionary fibre system could be incorporated into fabrics that would be able to change their "breathability" in response to changes in the environment.

The humble cockroach is under the microscope to see if its simple sensor devices can



George Jeronimidis, left, and Julian Vincent are studying the structure of antlers to create a light, flexible, impact-absorbent material

be recreated for the benefit of key weapon systems such as fighter aircraft. "Insects have achieved fine sensing systems which we could try and adapt for defence purposes," Dr Vincent said.

He and Professor Jeronimidis, who have been working together for 20 years, have also been asked to design novel energy-absorbing material. They began by studying the structure of nutshells, including the hazel and brazil, but are now focusing on the antler bone and are already enthusiastic about the prospects of taking "what we need" from the structure to create a light, flexible, impact-absorbent material.

Antlers have been fine-tuned by nature to absorb violent impact during the rutting season, and the researchers are convinced that they can produce a composite material that is based on the same structure. Dr Vincent said the antler bone contained a spongy material that helped to absorb violent impact and it should be possible to create materials that copy the same concept by developing a synergy between biology and engineering.

"What we're interested in is the way things are put together in nature, not the materials themselves. After all, nature only has half a dozen starting materials, such as water, protein, calcium salts and sugar-based polymers, whereas there are thousands of man-made starting materials."

Professor Jeronimidis said the key to the research was to take what was best from nature. "Some scientists spend a lot of time developing special glues to join different compos-



Pine cone properties could be used in fabric



Cockroach sensors could be applied to aircraft

ite materials, but there is no glue in antlers: the joints are integrated and that's what we have to try and develop and also improve on if we can."

Under another contract awarded by the MoD's Defence Evaluation Research



Agency (Dera), they are studying how wood absorbs energy to see if there are any applications for the Armed Forces. Wood is a tough cellular material that can be damaged by impact but without shattering, Dr Vincent said. "Soft pine can be toughened even further by drilling carefully designed holes in it."

One typical application could be for armoured vehicles. They can be protected by adding steel plates, but this is very heavy and the centre for biomimetics hopes it may be able to develop something based on the concept of wood structures that could be as effective as steel but much lighter.

He added: "For us, in terms of energy input, material is cheap but shape is expensive, while in nature, material is expensive and shape is cheap. In other words, nature spends more time on design, and perhaps we should as well."

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# Australia's tropical waters come under attack from a dainty killer

FROM DES HOUGHTON  
IN BRISBANE

PRETTY little creatures no bigger than a thumbnail may hold the key to the unexplained deaths of dozens of swimmers in tropical Australia. Doctors at Australia's Venom Research Institute suspect that the irukandji jellyfish has a sting so toxic that it can induce heart attacks and breathing difficulties that lead to drowning.

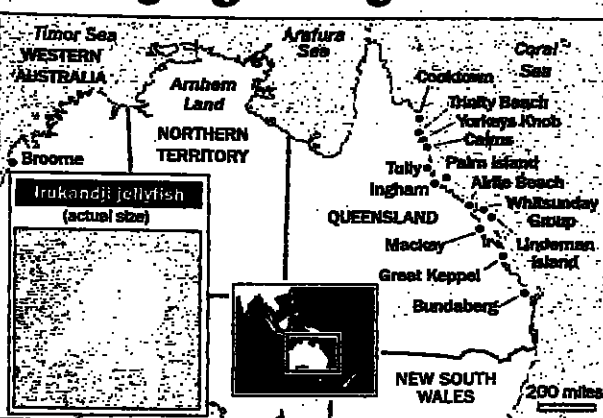
Ken Winkel, head of the institute, said between 60 and 100 people a year are treated for serious irukandji stings in Queensland alone. However, it was probable that many irukandji victims may mistakenly think they have suffered heart attacks because the creature's toxin has a delayed reaction.

To the dismay of tourism officials, the dainty stinger is found in some of Australia's most popular resorts where British tourists are drawn each year. Because of its size and transparency, the irukandji, which has four six-inch tentacles, is rarely seen and hardly ever caught.

Peter Fenner, the chief medical officer for the Australian surf lifesaving movement, is convinced the irukandji is responsible for human deaths and he fears their numbers may be increasing. Most are found around Cairns and further north, but the curse of the irukandji has been felt as far south as Bundaberg, right across tropical Australia and down to Broome on the coast of Western Australia.

Russell Hore, a marine biologist, has been campaigning for the development of an anti-venom since he was

## Drownings linked to tiny jellyfish



stung. "I was swimming at an offshore island marine park when I felt a stinging sensation on my neck," he said. "Within five minutes I had developed stomach cramps and pain in my lower spine that was knife-like. My chest became restricted and my hair was standing on end." He spent five days fighting for his life in intensive care.

Aborigines in northern Australia and Papua New Guinea have for generations told stories of pretty little stingers that paralyse swimmers. It is only recently, however, that researchers have begun to understand the seriousness of the

irukandji threat. Doctors say victims can be unaware that they have been stung and almost never see the irukandji. They want more money for research. In the past 50 years Australia has produced anti-venom for a host of deadly creatures: The tiger snake, the taipan, the brown snake, the redback spider and the irukandji's larger, more deadly relative, the box jellyfish.

In his three-year search Mr Hore has captured only 18 irukandji, all on the same day. Then the project met a disaster. Mr Hore said he transferred his precious cargo to the venom institute at

Melbourne University, but a delivery delay meant the jellyfish were useless for research by the time they reached Dr Winkel's desk. Dr Winkel has since struggled to separate proteins extracted from the handful of tentacles he has in his possession.

"We don't know whether we will require 100 or 50 specimens to get a neutralising antibody to block the toxin binding to the cells," Dr Winkel said. "There is an ongoing supply problem with these little creatures. Developing an anti-venom is a long-term project and we will need to grow them to harvest their tentacles."

Meanwhile, Dr Fenner reports more cases of irukandji stings, either because they are more numerous or because more people are using the reef. He continues to campaign with health authorities for research money.

"The Surf Lifesaving Association... has a strong commitment to help to find a treatment for this tiny jellyfish that causes such misery and horrendous cost," he said. "Funding is essential to allow trained professionals to catch such jellyfish."

Tourist destinations such as Palm Island, Tully, Airlie Beach, the Whitsundays and Port Douglas have reported stings. A fully clothed professional pearl diver in Broome became a victim in 1991. At Palm Cove a swimmer was stung while inside a protective net in 1992.

Mackay, Cooktown, Lindeman Island, Great Keppel Island, Ingham, Arnhem Land, Yorke's Knob and Trinity Beach are all known irukandji sites.

# Cocaine island in the sun

David Adams, in St Kitts-Nevis, reports on a town living in fear

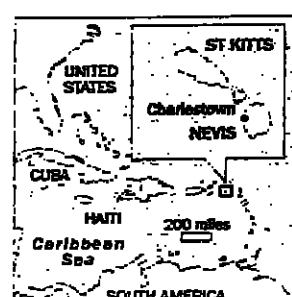
BASSETTERRE, lined with palm trees and pastel gingerbread houses, used to be an out-of-the-way retreat in the eastern Caribbean for British and American tourists.

But in the past three years the St Kitts-Nevis port has become a haven for a ring of allegedly ruthless drug traffickers who have terrorised its 32,000 inhabitants.

Their ringleader, the police say, is Charles "Little Nut" Miller, 37, a food and soft drinks importer wanted in the US and Canada on cocaine-trafficking charges.

A request to extradite Mr Miller to the United States was rejected by a local magistrate last year. An appeal is pending against that ruling, but in the meantime Mr Miller remains a free man.

The police say he continues to traffic in cocaine. In July, he was accused by Canadian police of taking part in a conspiracy to ship cocaine via St Kitts to Toronto.



Charles Miller, wanted in the US on drug charges, is said to be behind a reign of terror in Basseterre

The Miller case is much more than a frustrated drugs investigation. His untouchability highlights the increasing influence of drug traffickers in the tiny islands of the eastern Caribbean.

"What we have are some people here who are a law unto themselves," said Brian Reynolds, the Scotland Yard inspector who was sent out at the request of the St Kitts Government to take over as commissioner of the corrupt and ill-trained local police force.

In the wake of intense counter-drug efforts along the border between Mexico and the United States, experts say that traffickers are once again pumping tonnes of cocaine into the Caribbean, on their way to the US and Europe.

The United Nations released statistics on Monday indicating that two fifths of the cocaine sold in America alone enters via the Caribbean. While the Clinton Administration seeks to rally support in the region for its war on drugs, the small, vulnerable islands of the area complain that US trade policies and reduced financial aid are undermining local economies and making the drug trade more attractive.



Charles Miller, wanted in the US on drug charges, is said to be behind a reign of terror in Basseterre

armed robbery. After escaping from prison he fled to America, where he went to work for the notorious Shower Posse, a Jamaican crime gang based in south Florida. In its heyday in the mid-1980s, the Posse controlled a large share of the marijuana and crack cocaine market in several US cities.

He was arrested in 1985 in New York and pleaded guilty to cocaine charges. But he agreed to co-operate with prosecutors and in 1989 provided devastating evidence against the Posse leaders in their trial in Miami on sweeping drugs and murder charges. In return, he was given immunity from prosecution and the Government gave him a new identity and admitted him to its secretive Witness Protection Programme.

But Mr Connor later dropped out of the protection programme and disappeared. He was soon back in St Kitts, using the name Charles Miller. Since his arrival, the police say, a string of drug-related incidents has left nine people dead or missing.

In November 1995, America accused Mr Miller of being the ringleader behind a conspiracy to smuggle half a tonne of cocaine through Miami in late 1994. He is also suspected of being behind the murder in 1994 of Jude Matthews, the head of the St Kitts Special Branch.

# Yellowstone gases 'worse than ten power stations'

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

VOLCANOS, hot springs and other thermal features at the Yellowstone National Park contribute to the globe's "greenhouse" phenomenon by emitting millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, a study by American scientists has found.

In a paper presented this week at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco, researchers from the Pennsylvania State University reveal that the greenhouse gases given off by Yellowstone — the oldest and largest national park in the United States — exceed by at least ten times the emissions from a medium-sized coal-burning power plant of the sort that is found in many developing countries.

The park is renowned for its spectacular geysers, hot springs, waterfalls and geysions. Yet according to the findings of Caddy Werner and Professor Susan Brantley of Pennsylvania State University, the very features that are such a source of wonder could be the cause for environmental alarm.

Green lobby groups and campaigners are given to characterising the world's industrial "smokestacks" as the prime offenders in the increase in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. So far, hot spring systems such as those found at Yellowstone have not been included when scientific experts tally carbon dioxide emissions.

Dr Werner, a Geophysics researcher, spent three summers sampling the gases that emerge from Yellowstone's thermal vents, "mud pots" and the grounds adjacent to the park's

Mud Volcano area. According to her findings, the bulk of the carbon dioxide appeared to escape from tectonic fault lines running through these areas.

In their subsequent and painstaking calculations, Dr Werner and Professor Brantley found that the Mud Volcano area alone produces about 176,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. Extrapolating from that figure, the scientists concluded that the entire park must emit 44 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year, the equivalent of ten Roman power stations built in the Cretaceous era.

Dr Werner said: "We believe that geothermal systems are significant contributors to global estimates of carbon dioxide."

Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have nearly doubled in the past century. Most of the responsibility for this increase has been ascribed to the burning of fossil fuels. Blame has also been placed on the widespread disappearance of the tropical forests which once performed the role of recycling carbon dioxide gas into oxygen.

Scientists have for long been aware that volcanic systems, such as the one which is found in Yellowstone, spew large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. But until the Yellowstone study little effort had been made to quantify the emissions from natural geothermal systems.

Global warming was the focus of the international treaty concluded recently in Kyoto, which demands that Western nations cut emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases that are responsible for global warming.

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# Monkeys will be returned to Amazon

WOOLLY monkeys were taken from the Upper Amazon only 30 years ago for lovers in Europe of exotic pets. Plucked from their natural habitat they became lonely and rarely lived more than two years.

## Philip Delves Broughton on an animal rescue plan

denly joined by others, armed with guns and capable of killing an entire monkey community in one hunting trip. The devastation of the rain forests by logging and mining companies destroyed the monkeys' forest canopy where they swing from their tails foraging for food. Cornwall may be a long way from the Amazon, but there has been a sanctuary for woolly monkeys there since the 1960s, when Len Williams was given one as a pet. It did not take him long to see that they were social animals who thrived on each others' company and that they needed space to be happy. He persuaded pet owners and zoos to let their monkeys come down to the sanctuary in Cornwall and he now keeps 22 monkeys in a large area of linked enclosures providing a variety of natural environ-

ments. Now, with the support of the Born Free Foundation, one of the two charities chosen by *The Times* for its Christmas Appeal, it is hoped that the monkeys can be restored to the Brazilian rainforests.

The Cornwall Monkey Sanctuary, which since the death of Len Williams has been run by the Monkey Trust, has been in close contact with the Rehabilitation Centre of Amazonian Primates in Brazil for the past two years. The centre looks after 40 woolly monkeys and several other primate species, all of whom have been confiscated from the illegal pet trade. It will oversee the creation of a secure sanctuary for the woolly monkeys in the Amazon rainforest.

This strategy of giving animals as much freedom as possible while protecting their population numbers is at the very heart of the Born Free Foundation's work.

The foundation's primate project, however, is not restricted to woolly monkeys. It also helps to finance anti-poaching units in Uganda in order to protect the mountain gorillas and chimpanzees. Targeting of funds means that all money raised by this appeal will have an immediate and powerful benefit on the animals protected by the project.



A woolly monkey and its infant at the Cornwall Monkey Sanctuary

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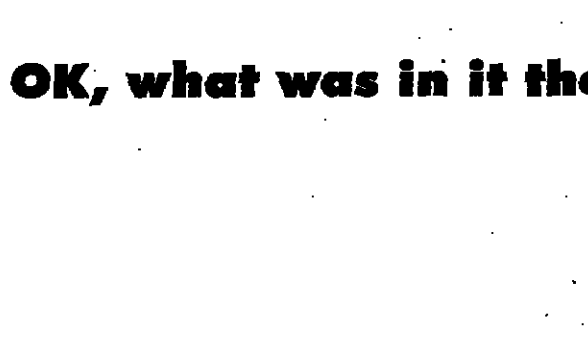
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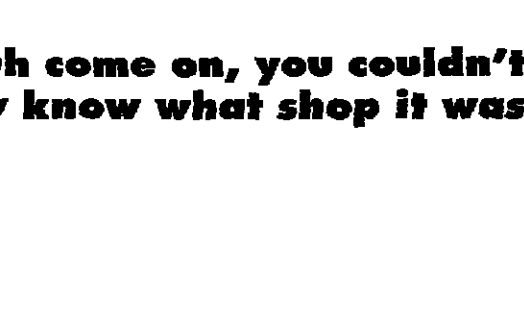
Just keep your eyes on the road, Romeo




I was looking at that shop window actually




OK, what was in it then?



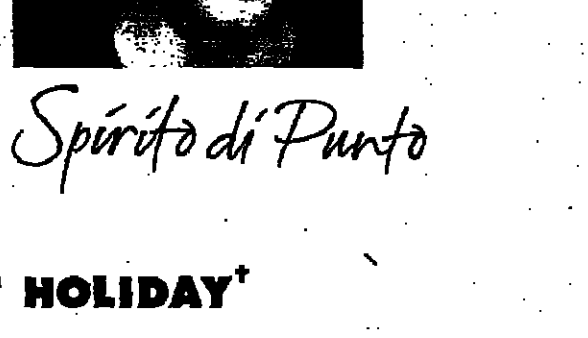
There was...you know...one of those cool toasters




Oh come on, you couldn't possibly know what shop it was



In a clothes store?



Trust me, I never miss a shop.



Spirito di Punto

## 'Extinct' moth discovered in abundance

By ROBIN YOUNG

ALMOST half a century after last being seen in Britain, a Zin moth has staged a comeback. *Sedina buettneri*, otherwise known as Blair's wainscot, has been rediscovered in force in a secluded Dorset river valley.



Blair's wainscot moth

Blair's wainscot was first identified in this country in 1946 by a retired British Museum beetle expert, Dr K.G. Blair, from whom it took its name. The moth disappeared, however, a few years later and the species was officially presumed extinct in Britain. The only known colony, on the Isle of Wight, was destroyed by land drainage and burning.

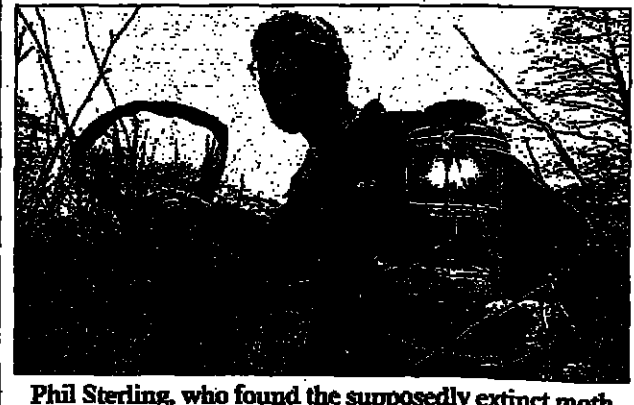
Butterfly Conservation, the organisation that made the new find, is anxious to deter collectors and says the colony's precise location will remain a secret. A spokeswoman said: "The reappearance of Blair's wainscot illustrates what a tenuous hold many species have on survival. We should not celebrate too soon. If intensive agriculture methods ever intrude into the colony, Blair's wainscot could again disappear."

The moth, with delicate pink streaks on its wings, feeds on sedge, but experts say it is unlikely to be found beyond southern Britain, thus excluding from its range the Sedgfield constituency.

of its namesake, the Prime Minister. Phil Sterling, Dorset county ecologist and the local moth officer for Butterfly Conservation, said two males and a female were first spotted late in 1996. These were thought to be occasional migrants but the discovery of larvae in recent weeks has confirmed the existence of an established colony.

"It is possible they have returned here from the Continent," Mr Sterling said. "Or they may have survived in such small numbers that they were never spotted before. It is a bit of a collector's item. I suspect there will be tens of them flying here next year, although that gives a false impression of their viability."

The wainscot family of moths take their name from distinctive markings thought to resemble wood panelling. Downing Street said yesterday: "We are delighted to hear of the reappearance of this moth. We sincerely hope it continues to flourish."



Phil Sterling, who found the supposedly extinct moth

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# Nurses beg to know their fate

AS THEY begin their second year in a cramped and stifling Saudi jail, Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan are pleading with their captors to end the uncertainty over their eventual fate.

The British nurses complain that they have still not been officially charged over the murder of an Australian colleague and growing rumours circulating in their prison over their likely punishment is damaging their health.

While McLauchlan was allowed visits this week from her husband and parents, prison staff kept a suicide watch over Parry. The injuries of her sister, Sandra, in a car crash meant that her only surviving relative was not able to visit, so Parry was left in cell 8 of Dammam Central Prison, known as the International House, with a handful of convicted drug smugglers as her only company.

In the new year she is expected to be found guilty of murder and, although Saudi diplomats have told the Foreign Office privately that she will not be executed, her family are sceptical about such assurances. A Saudi man found guilty of murder was beheaded in public yesterday, bringing the total for the year to 123.

Parry's family describe her as "extremely depressed". Jonathan Ashbee, her brother-in-law, said: "We are very worried about Deborah. The fact that she has no idea when all this will be resolved is mind-blowing."

"Being in a Saudi jail is awful enough but when you haven't done anything wrong it is a living hell. In the weeks before Christmas the girls were haunted by rumours circulating the jail that Deborah faces 15 years and Lucille will have to serve eight as a warning that Westerners get no special privileges."

In Christmas messages to their families the nurses told of their fears that it could be years before they will be allowed home. Diplomats who visited them could offer no hope of any early end to their ordeal.

The gamble they face in the new year is whether to accept their jail sentences and then plead with King Fahd for clemency and an early release. If they appeal, as they seem determined to do, the process could take another two years. Parry conceded to her family: "Whatever

**Their trial may be over but the agonising wait continues, writes Daniel McGrory**

we do, we will be in prison for more Christmases to come.

McLauchlan was allowed out of prison to see her parents at a local police station and was hoping that the authorities would allow her time alone with Grant Ferrie, whom she married last month.

Her parents, Stan and Anne, complain that, although she was sentenced in September to 500 lashes and eight years in jail, she has still not been told what she was convicted of. Her family do not

So far the authorities have refused. Saudi police say they have no doubt of the Britons' guilt.

It was in the early hours of December 11 last year that the body of Miss Gilford was found in her bedroom in Block 44. She had been bludgeoned, suffocated and stabbed 13 times.

Police waited two days before interviewing McLauchlan, 31, from Dundee, and Parry, 38, from Alton, Hampshire. Six days later, Parry and McLauchlan were arrested as they visited a shopping complex. Police say they were using Miss Gilford's bankcard to draw money and admitted the killing.

Police claim there had been a row between Parry and Miss Gilford, allegedly over the ending of a lesbian relationship, and that McLauchlan entered the apartment to separate them. Parry is then said to have hit Miss Gilford with an ornamental teapot and McLauchlan to have held a pillow over her face while Parry stabbed her.

The nurses' account of their confession is dramatically different. They tell of being frogmarched into Dharhan police station where they were stripped, sexually assaulted and made to sign confessions on a promise that they would be freed.

Their families argue that the Saudis ignored forensic evidence such as the clump of blonde hair found gripped in Miss Gilford's hand. Neither of the accused is blonde. A man's bracelet was found near the body and there were stories of how Miss Gilford had clashed with security guards at the hospital because she allegedly threatened their money-lending and prostitution rackets.

Five guards on duty that night disappeared and were never questioned. One was suspected of the murder of another nurse, a year earlier, in the same hospital.

Despite assurances that the women will not be flogged, relatives are dismissive, saying that promises of a fair trial were ignored. The murder weapon has never been found, no fingerprints of the women were in the Gilford apartment and both had alibis.

Parry has been allowed a handful of visits to the prison, psychiatrist and has been prescribed anti-depressants. Her family are concerned that her condition continues to deteriorate. McLauchlan



Frank Gilford: "blood money" deal



Deborah Parry, left, has still not been sentenced over the death of Yvonne Gilford, centre. Lucille McLauchlan, right, faces 500 lashes and eight years in jail but neither she, her parents Stan and Anne, far right, husband Grant Ferrie, with McLauchlan second right, nor her lawyer, Salah al-Hejjailan, know the charge. Parry's sister, Sandra, and brother-in-law, Jonathan Ashbee, left, fear for her health

has always been the more combative of the two, arguing with her guards over their mistreatment. It was she who led protests for better prison facilities.

Mr Ashbee said: "What that means is a table-tennis set for recreation and, instead of four holes in the ground as toilets, the inmates have six between them. That means the raw sewage does not spill out on to the floor until

later in the day." The few washbasins they share are clogged with nappies because many of the women have given birth there after being jailed for adultery.

The women are given books and writing materials by British diplomats who visit them once a week but they spend most of their days sitting underneath lines of flapping washing trying to find some shade and cool. Their only exercise

is to walk around the small courtyard. "It is the boredom that gets them down," Mr Ashbee said.

They sleep on 2in-thick foam mattresses on steel bunks and share with up to ten other women. Cockroaches infest the building and the air-conditioning has not worked properly for five years. Their daily diet is invariably pitta bread, salad and rice; both have lost weight and suffered bouts of

dysentery. They have no television and keep in touch only through Parry's transistor radio.

Diplomats successfully approached companies trading in defence contracts in the region to pay Mr Gilford's blood money because neither family could raise the figure. Lawyers in Britain and Saudi Arabia have worked for free and admit they can see no early end to the women's ordeal.

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# How the forgotten band made sure their face fitted

Des Burkinshaw meets 1997's pop pin-up, and wonders who is next



From rock chick to rock chic: the old image of Texas, and the album cover with a Spiteri picture by Teller and design by the art director and art editor of *The Face*

A WOMAN in her late twenties steps in front of a top-line fashion photographer and becomes the pop face of 1997. Juergen Teller's raw but sexy pictures of Charleen Spiteri, lead singer of Texas, helped to rescue the band's career from doldrums so deep that it was almost time for them to stick spangles on the

drums and head for the cabaret circuit. A year on, the band have infuriated their critics by nocking up four top ten hits, *Say What You Want*, *Halo*, *Black Eyed Boy*, and *Put Your Arms Around Me*, and sold more than 1.2 million copies of their album, *White on Blonde*. They have been nominated

everywhere for Comeback of the Year awards, and are almost certain to carry off baskets of gongs at February's Brit awards. As the year draws to a close, insiders in the record industry like to play a game of guessing which other bands could benefit from a style makeover. The year has already seen the likes

of Natalie Imbruglia score hit singles with a look owing more than a passing nod to Spiteri. Certainly, Spiteri feels vindicated after being written off by the critics. "You have a real high, like the album going in at No 1, and you think it can't get any better, but then it does," she says in her broad

Glaswegian accent. "It has been a fantastic year for us." It could have been so different. This time last year, they were a forgotten band. They had a top ten hit in 1995 with *I Don't Want A Lover*, but a series of mediocre albums followed, and ten other singles barely scrapped into the top 40. After living in Paris for a

year, Spiteri, 29, told her co-writer, Johnny McElhone, that enough was enough, and that the band needed to get groovy. They added some loops and samples to the band's sound and hip, hop, bullseye. The success of the music speaks for itself. But it was Spiteri's transformation from

leather-clad surly "rock chick" to Prada-clad androgynous icon who excited everyone from Chris Evans to fashion journalists. Especially a picture of her emerging from a shower, hair sopping wet, wrapping herself in a towel. Earlier this year, Evans told Radio One listeners that he would leave his girlfriend for her, given half a chance. Next day, he sheepishly admitted that he had been ticked off by his girlfriend. His support for *Say What You Want* was widely credited for its success, but Spiteri points out: "It was a hit all over the world, so it can't just have been that, can it?"

You've got to be cool to be on the cover of *The Face* magazine. The December issue featured Spiteri with Memory Man from American rap act Wu Tang Clan. The pair have recorded a new version of *Say What You Want* for next year. And as the dollars, pounds and yen pour in for Mercury Records, a giant collective lightbulb has popped over the heads of the other record companies. Could it be possible that other bands languishing at the bottom of the roster — maybe with four albums to their credit but no hit singles for years — could be converted into fashionable profit?

Dave Jennings, of the weekly *Melody Maker*, has no doubts which fading pop star should spice himself up with a makeover. He says: "Simon Le Bon from Duran Duran should do a Sting." Instead of teaming up with Puff Daddy, however, he should team up with Mark Morrison and record a new version of Duran Duran's *Wild Boys*.

Although a sex symbol in his day, could Le Bon still cut the fashion mustard in 1998? "Oh yes," says Jennings. "All he needs to do is get down the gym, lose a few pounds and get rapper Ice T in to give him some wardrobe advice — a colourful jacket, a fedora — he'd look great." And what about Spiteri herself? The former hairdresser has obviously enjoyed her year as an iconic pin-up, but it is apparent she really cares only about the music. There is no make-up lady in tow. A keen rock climber, she points out to interviewers that her nose has been broken four times and never fixed.

Kas Mercer, her long-time press officer at Mercury Records, is still puzzled by everything that has happened this year: "I've always thought she was lovely. I don't think she's changed that much apart from her hair. I think the rest



Spiteri: "I was an ugly duckling," she says

of the world has just finally caught up." Spiteri says with a shrug: "It's like my face just seems to fit this period in time. I was a bit of an ugly duckling, and now I'm a swan. I just woke up one morning and my face had changed." While they can do no wrong at present, she knows from the band's wilderness period that their current success and her status as Most Fanciable Woman in Pop are only temporary. "What does being the face of the year mean?" she says. "It just means that there'll be another one along next year."

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## VALERIE GROVE MEETS: DAVID BENSON

## Carrying on Kenneth's pain

Here is a post-Christmas treat: you have exactly two weeks in which to catch David Benson before his one-man show, subtitled *My Life With Kenneth Williams*, ends its 18-month tour at Hammer-smith, West London.

I first caught the show at the Edinburgh festival this summer. In the audience behind me was Margaret Forster (always hard to please) and at the end we both turned and chorused: "What a performance."

Benson's impersonation is faultless, but the show is far more than that. "People come expecting 'Carry On Kenneth' and a lot of gurning, and are surprised when it's not that simple," Benson says. "They come to cackle, and then they turn contemplative. Which seems to me the whole point of theatre."

Williams's friends have flocked to it and are staggered by Benson's uncanny accuracy. Of the scene where KW is in a restaurant with friends, bawling them about, telling loud stories, insulting other diners, they say, "That's just what it was like having dinner with him — how did you know?" ("I behaved disgracefully" is a refrain in Williams's diaries).

Benson is unblinkingly truthful about Williams's childish emotional avarice, his narcissism, his camp ambivalence, his wild morale swings from blustering bumptiousness to self-lacerating melancholy. He kept his stove wrapped in Cellophane and his lavatory barred to visitors; was an autodidact who flaunted his knowledge of Schopenhauer in that trivial forum, *Just A Minute*; was socially difficult, hating to be outdone in anecdote,

age, and waspish and spiteful, even, on chat shows. But he was also loved for his irreplaceable uniqueness, his genius. Benson never met Williams. The only tenuous connection was that, at 13, he wrote a story, *The Rag-and-Bone Man*, which won a *Jackanory* competition in 1975. Williams read it on the programme. Benson was mortified: he wanted his idol, Spike Milligan, to read it. Williams was so camp, the entire school — a comprehensive in Birmingham — would leer at him.

He was saved, at school, by his vocal agility; he could do any voice, Williams included. He was the sort of lad who played around making tapes of sound-effects, and could do all the Goons. (In the show he does a particularly brilliant Maggie Smith.)

Offstage, the engaging Benson resembles a young James Cagney in his Buster Keaton hat. After reading theatre studies at London University, he packed his bags and headed for Edinburgh, where he knew nobody, "to find out who I was". He washed dishes and worked in a homosexual bookshop, the first in Scotland, "polishing up my persona for public presentation". Then he joined Jeremy Weller's Grassmarket Theatre, which did semi-documentary improvisations with people from the social

A one-man show proves to be more than an exercise in uncanny impersonation



substantia in a Fringe trilogy entitled *Glad, Mad and Bad*. "I was flung into a room with scaggy old homeless drunks and young football hooligans, playing the warden of a hostel. It was exhilarating."

Benson had to discipline the material. "They all had amazing stories to tell, but no sense of what worked dramatically," while retaining its passion and fire. Very good training for constructing his Williams show from a mountain of

They come to cackle and then they turn contemplative

succeeded as Hodgson. And my new name gave me a new confidence, immediately shutting off the ghost of the past that stopped me acting."

He includes vignettes from his own life in the show to be emotionally uncompromising. He was never "besotted" by Williams. He is more interested in Dr Johnson's *amanuensis*, Boswell, who said no event could be experienced until you have written it down.

Benson first kept a diary at 19, "when I felt I would explode if I didn't tell someone I was homosexual". He told his A-level English teacher, Gwyn Thomas, who was wonderfully understanding. "Well, David," she said, "what you've just told me, in Greek times, would have been absolutely normal."

"On our first day, she came in, extremely striking, hair piled up in a bun, perched on the desk, and began reading *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. She was very camp, a nice Miss Brodie. I was entranced. I thought, this is the teacher I've been looking for all my life. I felt I could tell her anything."

Exactly three years ago, Benson was working full-time in a New York laundromat and mailing off, in the Bronx, folding sheets and sending faxes, living with his American lover. "I loved him to death, but I had to stop" — they broke up in Edinburgh this summer — "because it had become like Orton and Halliwell. I couldn't enjoy my success; I felt less of a person, having to consider this other person's needs and feelings all the time. Why do people need partners? You meet someone, and before you know it you've signed this unwritten contract that you'll never want

to see anyone else. I think being single is my natural state." He says taking up journal writing again enabled him to write the show. He had been blocked by a terror of writing. Now he starts every day by covering up to six A4 pages in longhand: "a daily letter to myself, solving problems and deciding what I really want."

When people write to him after the show for advice, he tells them to start a journal. "Contentment can only come through self-knowledge. You must accept yourself, faults and all. So many people are terrified of being alone."

But KW lived alone and wrote journals, and still committed suicide... "This is what I can't understand: to spend that much time brooding on your life and never reach a point when you accept your life as it is and enjoy it."

If Benson has a hero, it is more Quentin Crisp than KW, "because Crisp is so sane and witty, and knew and accepted his faults. Kenneth was in constant conflict with himself and with life generally. Everything he loved, he hated — his audience, himself, Louise his mother. Louise had a lot to do with his problems. But he wouldn't hear a word said against her." Williams



David Benson includes vignettes from his own life: "You must accept yourself, faults and all"

railed against public recognition: "I can't walk down a street in London without the nudges, the staring, the following, the requests for autographs and all the shouting (abuse and praise)... I loathe it. I would willingly exchange it all for anonymity and a steady, uninspiring job which required diligence and integrity."

"A lie," says Benson, "but it indicates his confusion." Barry Took's wife, Lyn, asked why Benson does not show the kind, sweet side of Kenneth. "But I am trying to show a man in *extremis*. He's had

enough. He longs to 'cease upon the midnight with no pain'."

We are in a traffic jam. Benson shouts "Ere, get a move on!" out of the car window, in his Kenneth Williams voice. He can stop a street dead in a trice by turning on the Kenneth.

"But as of January 11, which is also my 36th birthday, I've got to start afresh. I'll be like Fred without Ginger, but I don't want people to think I can't do anything but Kenneth, so we're having a trial separation."

The first step will be playing Noel

Coward in a new television series of *Goodnight Sweetheart*, by Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran. Then he is going to write a book (Quentin Crisp said everyone should write one book, and it should be about themselves) about how his Kenneth Williams show took him "from total obscurity into the spotlight". So while he's still there, try to catch this extraordinary theatrical experience.

Think No Evil Of Us... *My Life With Kenneth Williams*, Lyric Studio, Hammer-smith, West London, until January 10.

## Something safe for the family to talk about

## TELEVISION

Paul Hoggart

on the holiday

season's offerings

Christmas television makes a serious effort to offer an alternative to having a life these days. So we had quite a tricky choice on Christmas Eve, faced with the prospect of yet another dose of conventionalised ancient rituals, presided over by people in outlandish vestments.

But we passed on the *Eurotrash* Christmas special and went to midnight Mass in Norwich Cathedral instead, which was much more fun.

Christmas Day was another story, however. In a world where the piano has not so much been killed as ethnically cleansed, television has become the heart of our annual extended family gatherings, providing something safely neutral to talk about.

Watching *Top of the Pops* with eight children aged 7 to 23, for instance, is much better than watching it at home. How else could I have known that Esther of Eternity, has "an ugly haircut" or that their co-singer Bebe Williams used to have hair, but "he's a baldy now".

Nor would I have realised that the Leeds anarchist rockers Chumbawamba had sold out by dropping the letters "pi" from a word ending "sing" from this family show, or spotted that Ultra Nate seems to have sandpaper glued to her head.

If you tried very hard you could just about avoid the Tele-babies, although I was delighted to see Harry Enfield throwing Po down a flight of stairs in his wonderful Christmas special. This also included a superb sketch about a man-entertaining his son and son's gay lover in which Harry was apparently played by his father, Edward.

The Spice Girls, on the other hand, were harder to dodge. Oddly enough they forgot to mention either their manager or a certain Spanish awards ceremony in their review of the year. Still, Harry Enfield's Self-Righteous Brothers' rage at their shoddy workmanship as roofers, plumbers etc made up for that. Enfield's was one of the two best Christmas shows this year.

BBC's *Cardigans at Christmas* showed us just how far we have come since the Fifties. The oddball commentators seemed to have been recruited from a late-night raid on the Groucho Club but the clips were wonderful, if only for reminding us just how ghastly Christmas television used to be.

This theme was deliciously echoed in the Perry Como-style inserts in this year's other triumph, *Men Behaving Badly*, a wonderful tragicomic counterpoint and a fine climax to a traditional family day spent chortling drunkenly on the sofa.

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# A little bit of Swampy in us all

Simon Barnes on the importance of innocence

When I was asked to choose my image of the year, I chose Swampy. Swampy, the eco-warrior, blazings with that most frightening of all qualities: innocence. The world is going wrong, well, I had better put it right, then, hadn't I? Ideas that simple, that honest, that innocent: they frighten the life out of people.

Christmas is followed by St Stephen's Day, St Stephen's by the Day of the Holy Innocents. These are two of the carnal and bloody acts that are always celebrated around Christmas: what has been called "the birthday garland of martyrs". So perhaps this is not a bad time in which to celebrate the innocence of Swampy.

Swampy thought the planet was being spoilt, and that this was a bad thing. So he took on the possibility of death and the certainty of quite extraordinary discomfort in order to stop various bits of planet from being paved over or otherwise destroyed. He tunneled beneath the wrongs of a wrong-minded society.

I am not so much concerned with Swampy the man as with Swampy the icon: or to be more exact, Swampy the figure on a medieval triptych: the face of holy innocence bearing with him the gruesome implements of his martyrdom: a saint traditionally portrayed with headtorch and asymmetric haircut.

Perhaps we were really voting for Swampy, not Blair

Innocence is the most difficult of things to deal with. It lays bare the corruptions and compromises within oneself: it cries out for exploitation. Why are we destroying the planet? Who actually wants it to be destroyed? And what are you doing about it?

Christmas is a time in which innocence is much celebrated. The main form of celebration is telling lies to children about a white-bearded elderly gentleman; innocence crying out, as it does, for exploitation. Children, of course, greatly prefer truth to lies. I am currently trying to write a book for children that tells the truth about the state of the planet. My working title, which is half, but only half, facetious, is *Every Child's Book of the Ecological Holocaust*.

Children, with that perfect moral directness which is the difference between innocence and naivete, have no difficulty in seeing that it is wrong to kill off the snow leopard, the Seychelles magpie-robin, the Iowa pleistocene snail, the Lake Victoria cichlids and the Kerry slug — all endangered animals.

Children see the infinite fragility of their own world and, without compromise, wish to save it. They wish to save the world, and the creatures within it, which comes to

much the same thing. There is an essential innocence to this vision: just as there is an innocence — not naivete — about the entire global conservation movement.

Innocence is by definition fragile. Innocence is something you are supposed to lose, or have lost for you. I once heard a Christmas Day sermon when I went to Mass with my wife, who is a Roman Catholic. The sermon's theme was the fragility of God; for God came to Earth as a baby in need of looking after, and not as conquering king.

The priest then neatly drew the analogy: helpless God, helpless Earth. Both, in their innocence, at the mercy of human hands. The human record of looking after both is not exactly one hundred per cent; or at least, not in the right direction.

I am not sure whether it was the Labour Government that was innocent, or those that voted it in. But life is not much fun without hope. And so we chose to believe in change, the hope that for once, the new boss will not be the same as the old boss.

But in truth, we were not innocent, which is a fine thing to be. We were naive, which is not. If there was an innocent abroad at election time, perhaps it was Martin Bell, who came up with the shocking suggestion that it was better to vote for goodness than for badness.

But really, we voted in a load of politicians, and now we start whingeing because they are behaving like politicians. Perhaps the secret of our dismay is that we did not really want to vote for politicians at all. We wanted to vote for goodness; for innocence. Perhaps the votes cast for Tony Blair were in fact intended for Swampy.

Perhaps we wanted to vote in an innocent who believed that bad things should be stopped and that good things should be started. Perhaps the Labour landslide was a simple longing for lost innocence: an innocent longing for lost simplicities.

The story of the rest of the year has been the shocking revelation that Tony Blair was not Swampy after all. Just another politician. He may turn out to be a good politician — good in the sense of "virtuous", as well as the more political sense of "effective" — but a politician he will remain.

We need the innocence of Swampy. More, we all need to free the Swampy within ourselves. The sight of a skein of geese, a good bit of wild country, or for that matter, a jolly child, is enough to unleash the innocent part of ourselves. Perhaps we do not ever truly lose our innocence. We just mislay it.



## The roots of dishonour

The honours system is probably past reform — so why do our Prime Ministers love it so much?

This is the time of year when an old man's fancy turns to honour. Or rather it turns to honours, which is not quite the same thing. He knows already whether his long overdue "recognition" has come through, but in a few days' time the world will know as well. As the recent saga of Bernie Ecclestone revealed, occasional agonies enhance the ecstasy. You do not need to read Trollope to know that there is nothing so potent in public life as "the Queen has been pleased..."

The proudly unhonoured Michael Foot tells a story of his early days as Labour leader. He was invited to suggest some new Labour peers but had declined to do so since he was opposed to the Upper House and was wary of seeming a hypocrite. (His colleagues were to prove less bound by consistency or scruple.) The whips protested bitterly. The leader might find nominating peers distasteful, but while the system existed the party could not ignore it.

Mr Foot conceded under protest and put forward six names of former Labour MPs whom he knew to be on hard times. The whips were appalled at the list. "But Michael, none of them has any money," they cried. Mr Foot at this point held his ground.

Exploiting the honours list for party gain is, under the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925, a misdemeanour rendering the culprit liable for a two-year imprisonment or a fine of up to £500. Anyone who gives money in the hope of obtaining an honour "is liable to forfeit that same to His Majesty". To the best of my knowledge this law has never been enforced. Abusing the list is the political equivalent of taking cannabis. It seems mildly pleasant and the crime is victimless. All that matters is not getting caught.

Most liberal-minded party leaders pledge themselves to reform this venal but otherwise trivial corner of public life. They soon find honours as potent for the giver as for the receiver. Harold Wilson abolished "political honours" but reinvented them under another name. James Callaghan abolished them but Margaret Thatcher reintroduced them and even made some hereditary.

Party managers used knighthoods and peerages to raise money, reward journalists and discipline backbenchers. The top 20 donors to Conservative Party funds in the 1980s received

a total of eight peerages and 11 knighthoods. Both Conservative and Labour leaders have come to treat roughly half the "before-the-name" honours list (peerages and knighthoods) as a crude lever for party fundraising. Neither the monarch nor the honours scrutiny committee has felt strong enough to object.

John Major promised to democratise the system and end "gongs with jobs". The only job excluded from this reform, surprise, surprise, was politics. Political honours were retained and the abuse of the list continued. If any backbench loyalist could get a knighthood and a minister a peerage,

George, such cool rationalism must jeopardise the entire system. We are told that at least the Garter is secure. When Mr Major proudly announced the abolition of the "working-class" British Empire Medal, in favour of the "petty bourgeois" Member of the British Empire, he was praised to the skies. The consequence, I am told, is that the working classes now find it even harder to enter the halls of imperial grace.

When honours are showered on the good, bad and indifferent with apparent abandon, it is hopeless to deny what lawyers call a "consideration". As Mr Blair found in the case of Mr Ecclestone, there is no such thing as a free gift.

Mr Ecclestone was reportedly pushed for a title by the Tories after giving them money even as he was switching his largesse to Labour. Mr Blair's first honours list was traditional, strong on friends and rich

men of a generous disposition. The spin-doctors say this is to change in favour of "hidden merit". Next week's list will be interesting.

Falstaff derided honour as but a word, air, a mere scutcheon. It cannot mend a leg. No, but it can certainly help the body politic to walk. The power of an honour lies in it being available to a Prime Minister not for those who deserve it but specifically for those who do not. An average party leader offers in the region of 1,000 peerages and knighthoods. Tony Benn not implausibly calculates that some 10,000 people in the purview of politics must be in thrall to those holding this patronage. They are not corrupt. But as they near a gong their actions acquire a dusting of caution, a light bloom of deference. They want it so badly.

Those who want something badly cede power to those who can give it. Why else do leaders so jealously hold on to this ostensibly trivial task? To government, the system is a benefit

conferred without cost. By hiding behind Crown privilege Downing Street need not account publicly for "the list". The process is secret and liable to infinite corruption. As the honours reformer John Grigg wrote in 1993: "Nobody holding the job of Prime Minister... could fail to abuse the honours system to some degree. The temptation is too great to be resisted by any human being."

Since in this matter only the powerless are reformers, I offer my own modest proposal. The only way of ending abuse is to detach the awarding of honours from the wielding of political power. It must be removed from Downing Street. If the Conservative or Labour parties wish to reward donors or loyalists, they should find a other means, not hijack the good name of the State. There is patronage aplenty in Downing Street without polluting the honours list.

An idea once put forward by *The Economist* was to convert the covert sale into an open one. A restricted number of titles would be sold annually at auction. Vast funds would be generated, to be fairly distributed to political parties and to support the monarchy. A more dignified alternative would be to make the Crown the true fount of honour. Names would be submitted to a royal commission appointed by the Royal Household. The commission would assume Downing Street's vetting role and there would be no Prime Minister's or Opposition Leader's "list".

The monarchy would thus be performing a proper function of head of state, as the nation collectively recognised meritorious work by its citizens. Such a reform would enhance the status of monarchy. It would make awards for merit seem fair, which they surely should be. The taint of political sycophancy would be removed from titles. An Aagean stable of government would be deansed.

The smart response is to declare that since the system is no better or worse than it has ever been, leave it alone. The honours list has always been infused with mediocrity and corruption. It pours a drop of oil on the mechanism of the body politic. It is harmless. Such cynicism cannot be faulted, given the current public regard for politics. But in that case we might be spared the humbug about rooting out sleaze.

Simon Jenkins

## Santa stuck

THAT OLD daredevil Father Christmas almost came upstuck at Southwark Cathedral during Midnight Mass attempting one exploit too far. Santa made a Christmas Eve appearance at the South London cathedral to mark the departure of the Right Rev Roy Williamson, the bishop, at the end of the month. As the service reached its climax, a door opened in the bellry, a rope dropped to the floor and Father Christmas, aka a professional climber, began abseiling earthwards, with a bag of presents tied to his belt. About halfway down, however, his white beard became entwined in the harness, to which he was attached, and he became stuck, hanging in mid-air like the Archangel Gabriel. Realising his predicament, Father Christmas cut his sack free, and it dropped into the outstretched arms of a priest 40ft below. He attempted to climb back up, but to no avail and then struggled, equally unsuccessfully, to free his beard from the rope.

"As he was clearly stuck, the service carried on," said one of the congregation. "He was still hanging there as the bishop went on his final procession." Once the service was finished, hands appeared at the top of the rope and, after a 20-minute struggle, hauled Father Christmas back into the rafters. Hardly inspirational, but at least the service did not encounter the traditional disruption at midnight Mass: drunks in the pews singing carols off-key.

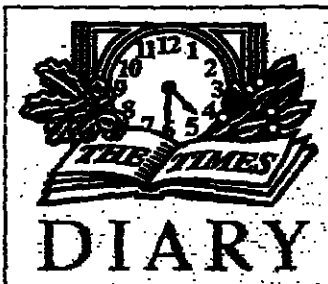


Hanging out: Santa, the bishop

● A STONE circle is to be installed outside the Serpentine Gallery in Hyde Park in memory of its late patron, Diana, Princess of Wales. The sculptor, Ian Hamilton Finlay — a sensitive, Scottish sort of chap — has added a little, but some might think rather dire, inscription: "To those who love solitude, the pensive, the melancholy and the amorous."

### If only...

IF ONLY Lord Lawson of Blaby's telephone manner had been more polished as a young man, we might never have heard of "negative equity". A book by Sir Gordon Newton, the *Financial Times* Editor between 1949 and 1972, explains why he was not succeeded by Lawson. The man who was to be Margaret Thatcher's most charismatic Chancellor was editing *The Spectator* in the late 1960s and was Newton's preferred successor. But one day in 1970, Lawson received a call from Garrett Drogheda, the FT's managing director, who offered him the editorship of the *Investor's Chronicle*. Lawson considered the FT's weekly staple as "indifferent" and responded that he would take



JASPER GERARD

the job only if he were guaranteed to succeed Newton. Drogheda was so offended by Lawson's presumptuous manner that he was, according to Newton's book, determined the young hack should never take over at the FT. The rest, including the boom and bust in the property market, is history.

### Saw point

PRIVACY is at last assured for the ageing Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards: he has won a campaign to stop a coupe of trees being axed next to his home in West Wittering. After months of protest from Richard and his fellow porch-protectors, Chichester District Council has refused applications from two local businessmen to do any clearance work. The more stalwart campaigners have been heard to complain that the move comes too late — the entrepreneurs felled 52 trees before the ban.

● BBC LOBBY hacks, gently jostling for the right to succeed Robin

Oakley as Political Editor, are about to be joined by a new face. John Kampfner, a political correspondent of the *Financial Times*, will join the team after finishing his biography of Robin Cook. Word at the BBC is that Kampfner will have a "special customised training programme" to allow him to bring "a more reflective style" to the Beeb's outlook. I am sure that John Sargeant, Huw Edwards and Jon Sopel, his ambitious BBC colleagues, are thoroughly looking forward to his arrival.

### High Roller

NORMALLY, barristers don't mind displays of conspicuous consumption. But Edward Hess's arrival at Temple Bar in a luxurious black Rolls-Royce, replete with chauffeur, television, drinks cabinet and escorting manservant, is upsetting some of his peers. Rather than an example of raking in the legal aid, the vehicle is actually provided to assist Hess in his evening job as the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea. But a legal type complains: "This car entirely blocks Middle Temple Lane. Who does he think he is, Lord Irvine?"



Lord Glenarthur beefed it up. Bottomley talked turkey

FESTIVE TIMES DURING the decade when she was in power, Virginia Bottomley always politely declined to play host to her famously-extended family during the festive season. But with the demise of her ministerial career, she opted this Christmas to take on the monumental task of providing for her tribe — all 22 of them, as it turned out. "When the red boxes were around, I could not possibly be bothered to think about cooking a turkey," explained the former Heritage Secretary. "But as soon as I was in opposition, I thought I would have them all round. I have to say, though, cooking the turkey ended up a good deal harder than working my way through the red boxes."



Lord Glenarthur, who was also once a Tory minister, was in equally festive mood, but for him politics remained firmly on the agenda. Helping to raise funds for charity at the annual Joy to the World concert at the Albert Hall, the former DHSS minister was about to lead ten lords leaping on to the stage during a rendition of the *Twelve Days of Christmas* televised by BBC1. While the producer's back was turned, Glenarthur — a stout supporter of the Sussex Cattle Society — pinned a placard on the hindquarters of a pantomime cow that was accompanying the eight madd's milking. As the creature's derrière filled the screen on Christmas Eve, viewers were able to read: "Sussex Beef is Best."







## LONDON CALLING

The Olympics are slowly returning to the spirit of '48

In an exceptionally difficult year, Britain was brightened during 1948 by the arrival of the Olympic Games held in London. The city had been scheduled to host the tournament four years earlier but the Second World War rudely intervened. London triumphed over competing bids from Detroit, Lausanne and Rome to stage them belatedly. Conducted in the aftermath of bloody conflict, in an era of rationing and restraint, and with the memory of Berlin 12 years earlier still strong, the London Olympics deliberately returned to the values that had inspired the 1896 revival of the Games. Fifty years on, a similar spirit of sporting "back to basics" appears to inspire those planning today for the next Olympiad in Sydney.

The 1948 Games were marked throughout by austerity. There were no expensive new stadiums erected. The Olympic "Village" consisted of revamped RAF and Army camps for men and halls of residence from London University for women. The budget for the entire enterprise was £600,000. The Antise Government had no intention of subsidising the spectacle. A profit of £10,000 was ultimately realised.

For all that, and the understandable absence of Germany and Japan, a record 59 nations entered and the exercise seized the public imagination. The undoubted star was Fanny Blankers-Koen, the Dutch housewife, mother and sprinter-supreme who stormed her way to four gold medals. These strikingly cheap Games were also extremely cheerful.

After that, the Olympics progressively became a monster media extravaganza. In the process this noble ideal sacrificed some of its soul. The successful launch of communications satellites permitted world-

wide television coverage. The Moscow and Los Angeles Olympics of 1980 and 1984 were marked by boycotts from the West and Warsaw Pact, respectively. An amateur occasion was ambushed — almost overnight — by the power of pure professionalism. Almost every sport (loosely defined) demanded inclusion, too often successfully. The Seoul Games of 1988 were unrecognisable from the London gathering four decades earlier.

The Atlanta Games of 1996 represented the pinnacle of this process. A total of 29 sports — including such innovations as beach volleyball — and 271 events were forced into a frantic fortnight. The sheer intensity of the commercialism shocked even modernisers in the Olympic movement. The Atlanta Olympics virtually collapsed under the strain of their self-imposed weight. Even before the bombing in Centennial Park, it was obvious that the transit network of the city could not cope. The International Olympic Committee, not the most reflective of institutions, finally realised that dramatic action was

essential. There are signs that Sydney, the host city in 2000, will attempt to shift back towards the values and emphasis of London. It has deliberately declined to accept more sports, events and competitors than its American predecessor. The Australians, rightly, aim to involve the athletes themselves more intimately in their planning. A small step towards sanity will be undertaken. In the modern era it is quite impossible to return outright to austerity and amateurism. Nor would this be advisable even if it were practicable. It is, however, possible to resist the rush in the opposite direction. The spirit of 1948 should still be the torch for the Olympic movement.

## FOXING DAY

A clash of cultures disguised as a difference of opinion

The conflict between hunters and protesters has become an unofficial element of the Christmas season. This was once again true yesterday. The atmosphere has become especially intense in the aftermath of the massive majority in the House of Commons last month for Michael Foster's Wild Mammals (Hunting With Dogs) Bill. The Government has offered no clear indication yet on how it will proceed. If it does not allocate extra time, then this legislation will fall. If it does, it could enter law quickly. This year's Boxing Day meetings might then be the last legal events of this kind.

Although turnouts have obviously varied, there was evidence in some places that the Foster Bill brought out record numbers on both sides. For all the heated discussion about the character of the fox and the nature of the hunt, other passions explain the power of this issue. This clash is a symptom of tensions between town and country, as well as of the class struggle for which conventional politics no longer provides an outlet. Many in rural Britain perceive the campaign against hunting as part of a wider broadside from an arrogant urban majority.

Opponents argue, as Mr Foster did, that the Boxing Day chase reveals the degree to which foxhunting is essentially "entertainment" for the benefit of a self-selected social minority. Some go much further, implying that foxes (presumably along with all other animals) should enjoy human, or even divine, rights. The Christian Socialist Movement, a 5,000-strong organisation affiliated to the Labour Party, has published a pamphlet attacking foxhunting on religious

grounds. Christopher Bryant, chairman of the pressure group, compares the pastime to "slavery, the Crusades, and apartheid". Martin Palmer, author of the missive, claims that the practice could be compared to the "Crucifixion of Christ". These statements are intemperate, to put it mildly. Quite why the Son of God chose to spend so much time with fishermen also remains a mystery.

The hunting issue is likely to become even more serious next year and the year after if the Government determines to support Mr Foster's legislation or a successor Bill. The police have historically held the ring between the huntsmen and the protesters. In future, they may be asked to arrest large numbers of local people who will insist on their rights to continue with a sport which has been practised for centuries. A Government that came to office with a pledge to crack down on crime and its causes would have created a whole new category of potential offenders. The resulting spectacle would not be attractive.

For that reason, the Prime Minister would be well advised to proceed with caution. His best option remains a Countryside Commission to examine all aspects of field sports, including foxhunting. It is essential to settle the question of what size the fox population should be if other species of animal are not to suffer unduly. It is also crucial to quantify the scale of cull necessary if foxhunting were abolished, and the methods required to achieve it. At the moment, this issue is a clash of cultures disguised as a difference of opinion. It will remain so until the full facts enter the field.

## SHOP TILL YOU STOP

A war of nerves continues between shopkeepers and consumers

Government statisticians invariably observe a surge in Britain's money supply in December each year. The regularity of this empirical observation led Lord Kaldor, the celebrated Keynesian economist of the 1960s, to remark that "at last monetary economics has discovered the cause of Christmas". These days, predicting the behaviour of consumers, or even the real timing of what economists call Christmas, has become more complex, as many of Britain's shopkeepers are finding to their cost.

Saddled with billions of pounds' worth of unsold stocks, panicky shopkeepers have been plastering "Sale" signs across Britain's high streets even before Christmas. Economists, who had spent the previous month bemoaning a slack Christmas and wondering why prices of imported goods — from shoes and toys to garden tools and computers — had not fallen even lower in response to the strong pound, are now predicting a record-breaking season of January sales and enormous price cuts. The truth is that nobody knows what shoppers have done or intend to do over Christmas. The holiday shopping season has changed from a stylised ritual into a deadly serious game of chicken between canny retailers and even more canny consumers.

Christmas shopping these days is more akin to a military campaign than a military parade. People used to troop off to the shops with military precision in mid-December and then retreat for a well-earned period of rest and recuperation after Boxing Day. It was only after a week to digest their turkeys

and tinker with their children's malfunctioning toys that consumers would regroup for the second stage of their great winter shopping campaigns.

Today, however, neither consumers and shopkeepers, nor economists and monetary officials, can enjoy the luxury of such relaxed behaviour. Shoppers leave the Christmas sorties to the last moment, in the hope that the retailers' nerves will snap, along with their prices, in the 24 hours before Christmas. Some shopkeepers respond by insisting on the highest possible prices, even at the cost of lower sales, before Christmas, knowing that the big battalions of really serious shoppers will only come out of their bunkers after December 26. Other retailers try the opposite approach — announcing sales and discount offers at the very start of the holiday season, insisting (implausibly) that such special offers will be snatched away at the stroke of midnight on December 25 or December 31.

Vexing as it is for retailers, such unpredictable behaviour is equally annoying for economists and government officials who try to base their policy decisions on wildly conflicting rumours about the true balance of forces on the high street front. There seems to be only one solution: some kind of non-aggression pact between shopkeepers and consumers. Perhaps retailers should stop overcharging before Christmas, only to be left with mountains of stock. Consumers should expect to pay sensible prices, whether they buy their goods in December, January or any other month.

## BSE: questions of responsibility

From Mr David Gladstone

Sir, You may be distracting the forthcoming BSE inquiry from the most important issue (leading article, December 23).

If Lord Justice Phillips's inquiry finds only "three candidates for public contempt", ie, that some in the beef industry engaged in potentially poisonous practices; that the MAFF leant over backwards to help farmers; or that some scientists played fast and loose with the parameters of certainty, then we shall have learnt nothing new.

What we need to know more about — because it will affect future policies — is the part played by a belief in deregulation for its own sake. Did the Government of the day change, or connive at the non-observance of, the rules previously in force governing the treatment of cattle feed?

The Phillips report will fail to satisfy this reader for one if it leaves the politicians altogether out of the reckoning.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID GLADSTONE,  
1 Mountfort Terrace, N1 1JJ,  
December 23.

From Mr Aidan Harrison

Sir, Your list of potential candidates for contempt over the BSE fiasco is, in my view, wide of the mark in one respect, in that I believe beef farmers are the victims.

BSE and any resulting risk to human health from CJD come from one avenue of food production: high-protein animal feeds, intensive dairy farming, worn-out cows and processed products made from their mechanically recovered meat.

Yet an entirely separate, innocent industry — the traditional, ecological and sustainable production of fresh beef, naturally reared on grass, silage and cereals — faces ruin because of the officially sanctioned activities of others.

I trust that Lord Justice Phillips will recognise what politicians and their scientific advisers have failed to understand for over nine years.

Yours faithfully,  
AIDAN HARRISON  
(Beef farmer),  
Morrellhurst,  
Netherwinton, Morpeth NE61 4PT,  
December 23.

From Mr Philip King

Sir, May I suggest two questions for the forthcoming inquiry into the origins and handling of the BSE crisis that has cost the taxpayer £4 billion and caused financial hardship for farmers?

Who are the agro-chemical companies responsible for manufacturing and supplying the contaminated animal feed that is said to have been the causative agent for BSE in cattle?

Are these companies likely to be sued for compensation by the Government and the National Farmers' Union, or will they be allowed to escape the consequences of their actions?

Yours sincerely,  
PHILIP KING,  
15 Oakridge Drive,  
East Finchley, N2 8DF,  
December 23.

## College fees

From Mr Elliot Vaughn

Sir, Given that £178 million is wasted by students dropping out of higher education (report, December 17), is it worth noting that, at 96.5 per cent, Cambridge University has the highest completion rate in the country?

The college system provides an excellent foundation for pastoral care: there is a large network of support for students, both within the college environment and within the larger university. As a students' union, we are concerned that the welfare network would be the first thing to be cut back if the college fees were to be reduced.

At £17 million, the cost of its college fees, Cambridge is expensive in the short term; but it is ten times less expensive than other universities that let their students down.

Yours faithfully,  
ELLIOT VAUGHN  
(Welfare officer),  
Cambridge University Students' Union,  
11/12 Trumpington Street,  
Cambridge CB2 1QA,  
December 17.

## Squirrel cull

From Mr Andrew Wells

Sir, I was interested to read that, according to the RSPCA, the killing of squirrels is "not strictly illegal" (News in brief, December 16).

I was under the impression that it was not at all illegal. Indeed, as squirrels cause severe harm to the population of small birds by raiding their nests, their killing can justifiably be encouraged.

Yours faithfully,  
ANDREW WELLS,  
6 New Covenant Place,  
Rochester, Kent ME1 1BA.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

## Radar expert's wartime high point

From Dom Alberic Stacpoole, OSB

Sir, Your excellent obituary of Professor R. V. Jones (December 19), alas, does not dwell on a famous high point in his life, the morale-lifting Bruneval raid of February 1942. Yet your photograph of him has in the background a narrow-beam Würzburg defence radar, such as was captured in that raid, which was launched at the instigation of Dr Jones. It yielded, he said, virtually all the information he ever gathered on those radars.

The individuals shown standing in front of the equipment include John Frost, in 1942 officer commanding the raiding party from 2 Parachute Regiment, in 1944 CO of 2 Para holding the Arnhem Bridge and a major-general when he died, aged 80, in 1993; and Flight Sergeant Charles Cox, principal radar mechanic on the raid, who died two months ago, aged 84.

The Würzburgs were causing our bombers increasing losses in late 1941, tracking their arrival and guiding their own interceptor fighters. A chain of radar posts had been built along the French coast, heavily disguised. The Bruneval one was selected for capture. Cox found dismantling it quite easy, since the radar was built in prefabricated parts.

A German operator was also captured, and was glad to spend an afternoon helping Dr Jones to fit the pieces together. Jones thereby discovered the limits of the wavelength tuning and the fact that there was no built-in counter-jamming device.

Bruneval is The Parachute Regiment's first battle honour. The success of that raid directly caused

the full expansion of parachute forces in 1942.

Yours faithfully,  
A. J. STACPOOLE  
(2 Parachute Regiment, 1954-57),  
Ampleforth Abbey, York YO6 4EN.

From Dr E. H. Putley

Sir, It is true, as stated in your obituary, that there were those who regarded research on infra-red (IR) as a threat to the timely development of RDF (radar, as it is now called), but this was not the reason for R. V. Jones's secondment to the Admiralty in 1938.

In an effort to make the most effective use of our limited scientific effort the Admiralty had agreed to undertake infra-red research on behalf of the three Services. As a contribution to this effort the Air Ministry agreed to second to the Admiralty their leading expert, Dr Jones.

Unfortunately, although the possibility of utilising IR (as first pointed out by Lord Cherwell in 1915) was fundamentally sound, the requisite technology was still in its infancy and, although there were some limited applications of IR in the Second World War, it was not until well after the end of the war that its full potential could be realised. Jones then returned to IR research, contributing to the foundations on which modern IR technology has been built.

Yours sincerely,  
ERNEST PUTLEY,  
20 Cockshot Road, Malvern,  
Worcestershire WR14 2TT,  
December 19.

## Charitable partnership

From Mr Stephen Beard

Sir, To Matthew Parris's recent article complaining about tax relief given to charities (December 12; see also letters, December 19), and Frank Prochaska's spirited response of December 18, I would add what I believe to be a far more serious challenge facing the voluntary sector.

With government increasingly withdrawing from funding in areas such as health, education and social welfare, there is a growing need for charitable giving to take up this shortfall. As we approach the new millennium, the business and professional community is far better placed than any other section of society to assist the voluntary sector in carrying out its vital work.

Yet average cash donations to charity from British companies only amount to some 0.08 per cent of its profits (article, September 3); this does not stand comparison with the contri-

butions made by industry in the US. Clearly, even without tax concessions, the UK business community urgently needs to reassess its obligation to make a more significant contribution in this field.

Similarly, there is also a need for the voluntary sector to recognise that there are too many charities in the UK and that a shake-up of this sector is overdue. This should go a long way to convince the business community that it has greater social responsibilities than it would currently appear to appreciate.

The work of local community foundations is an important preliminary to the partnership required between the business community and the voluntary sector to ensure that the invaluable work of the latter continues into the next millennium.

Yours faithfully,  
STEPHEN BEARD,  
39 Second Avenue,  
Mortlake, SW14 8QF,  
December 23.

## EU challenge

From Dr David J. Timson

Sir, Is the European Union so unpopular that the Government must spend taxpayers' money on indoctrinating schoolchildren?

When I read (report, December 18) that a competition is planned for which children must create a project extolling the supposed virtues of ever closer union for young people, then I know that the Government has resorted to desperate, and worrying, measures.

I presume that an entry highlighting the destruction of the British fishing industry and the loss of UK economic sovereignty inherent in monetary union would not be a winner.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID J. TIMSON,  
1 Kingsway Court,  
Kidlington,  
Oxfordshire OX2 5NL,  
December 18.

## Legal 'fat cats'

From Mr Andy Smith

Sir, As Mr J. D. H. Heath's partners are "entitled" to a slice of his income (letter, December 22), he is presumably "entitled" to a similar share of theirs. Also, the fixed costs of his office are an irrelevance in calculating his earnings, since he has to pay these in any event.

At £61.75 per hour I regard the Lord Chancellor's case as proven beyond reasonable doubt. Perhaps this reflects a fundamental difference in perspective.

Yours faithfully,  
ANDY SMITH,  
1 Mill Cottages, Rugby CV21 1BX,  
andy.smith@coventry.ac.uk

From Mr David Pearson

Sir, If all that Mr Heath can make out of a fee of £61.75 is a paltry 73p, then his firm must be unbelievably in-

## Identity coyness

From Mr R. G. Maling

Sir, In today's announcement of the intention to include photographs on driving licences from next summer, the Transport Ministry is reported as stating "they will not become identity cards". Why the coyness? In numerous instances of everyday life we are asked to provide a form of identity, the passport or driving licence being quoted as acceptable.

The Government's response to its own discussion document, *Government Direct*, implies that a name and number do not constitute identity. For heaven's sake, why, as military personnel, were we issued with "dog tags", carrying name and number, to wear around our necks under all circumstances?

Yours faithfully,  
R. G. MALING,  
Windfall, 11 Chalkshire Road,  
Butlers Cross, Aylesbury HP17 0TS,  
December 19.

efficient. Or is he unwittingly revealing why the law is so expensive? Perhaps we should now be charitable towards the £200,000 per annum barrister who, on the same calculation, would only earn in the region of £2,000 and be on income support.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID PEARSON,  
56 Windermere Avenue,  
Wembley, Middlesex HA9 8RY,  
December 22.

From Mrs Judith Evans

Sir, All Mr John Heath's sleeping partners gain a share of his fee for his idle wait at the police station at 2am. Where does one apply to join their ranks?

Yours faithfully,  
JUDITH EVANS,  
130 Abbots Road, Abbots Langley,  
Hertfordshire WD5 0BL,  
December 23.

## Directions, please

From Mrs Christine Stephens

Sir, After queuing on the M25 for nearly two hours recently I left at an unfamiliar exit to seek petrol and a telephone. Would it not be sensible to indicate the nearest garage at all motorway exits, or do other motorists have an extra sense with which I am not blessed?

Yours faithfully,  
CHRISTINE STEPHENS,  
10 Unfields,  
Little Chalfont HP7 9QH.

## Really useful names

From Mr David R. Wright

Sir, Your analysis of the choice of boys' names (report, December 22) omits one key factor: three of the five most popular names come from the *Thomas the Tank Engine* books.

I remain, Sir, your obedient namespotters.  
DAVID R. WRIGHT,  
19 Birchfield Lane,  
Murbarton, Norwich NR14 8BS,  
d.r.wright@btinternet.co.uk,  
December 22.

## Bread and wine as symbols of faith

From the Chairman of the Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England

Sir, Ruth Gledhill may be right (report, December 23) that "many Anglicans believe the bread and the wine [of the Eucharist] to be mere symbols of the body and blood of Christ". Unfortunately for her argument, there are individual members of all Churches who hold idiosyncratic beliefs. The question of eucharistic doctrine is best judged not by anecdotal evidence of what individual believers think, but by the official formularies of the Churches and ecumenical agreements between them.

Neither the Roman Catholic Church nor the Anglican Communion, which includes both the Church of England and the Church of Ireland, stands today precisely where they stood at the time of the Reformation. It is important not to oversimplify the Sacraments. Nevertheless, in the words of one of the texts of the final report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, officially approved by both Churches, we read: before the eucharistic prayer, to the question: "what is that?", the believer answers: "it is bread". After the eucharistic prayer, to the same question he answers: "it is truly the body of Christ, the bread of life".

Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has written of the agreement on eucharistic doctrine that "no further study would seem to be required at this stage".

Yours sincerely,  
JOHN HIND,  
Chairman, Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England,  
Church House,  
Great Smith Street, SW1P 3BZ,  
john.hind@compuserve.com  
December 23.

From Mr Leonard Scott

Sir, I was slightly mollified that your religion correspondent qualified her statement by saying: "Many Anglicans believe the bread and wine to be mere symbols" (my italics).

This may well be so. What I know for a fact is that there are substantial numbers of Anglican Catholics, myself among them, who believe, along with other Catholics, that there is no reason to suppose that the words of Our Lord repeated daily in the Eucharist — "This is my body... This is my blood" — mean anything other than what they plainly say.

Yours faithfully,  
L. SCOTT,  
Rue du Bois du Greffier 11,  
B-380 Lasne, Belgium.

From Mr Gavin Lloyd

Sir, The Church of Ireland has had a long and honourable history of hospitality towards worshippers of other traditions at her Communion services. I was therefore sorry to read that one of her members felt that President McAleese's taking Communion at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, was an empty gesture (letter, December 23). In this act of worship it seems to me that in one gesture the Church of Ireland has (unlike her English sister Church) shown herself to be truly Anglican — and Mary McAleese truly Catholic.

Yours faithfully,  
GAVIN LLOYD,  
60 Merton Road, Ambrosden,  
Bicester, Oxfordshire OX6 0LZ,  
December 23.

## Ghosts in common

From Mrs Jean McCormick

Sir, I was interested to read about the ghost of Francis Dawes (report, December 19), who hanged himself at Peterhouse, Cambridge, in 1789.

Some 25 years ago I was living in a house which had been built in 1853 by a Dr Dawes, a keen astronomer and a member of the Royal Society, who was buried in the local churchyard. One night to my amazement, and contrary to my strongly held religious tenets, I saw a ghost standing at the top of the stairs and for several weeks afterwards we experienced strange knockings and pictures falling off the walls.

Our local bishop, who came to advise us, said these experiences are much more common than people realise and he thought the ghost was very likely that of Dr Dawes come back to finish some work. Apparently on his deathbed he had been engaged in some mathematical calculations to do with his astronomical studies.

It would be curious if the Francis Dawes of Peterhouse was in fact a distant relative of the Dr Dawes I saw. Maybe the ability to revisit the living runs in families.

Yours faithfully,  
JEAN MCCORMICK,  
17 River Green, Hamble SO31 4JA.

## ... and roundabouts

From Mr David Cleary

Sir, Today's front-page headline reads: "Public swings in favour of the Prince". We know that the Prince is reputed to converse with plants but fancy MORI conducting a popularity poll among playground equipment.

Yours,  
DAVID CLEARY,  
41 Rugby Road, Dunchurch,  
Warwickshire CV22 6PG,  
clearyd@compuserve.com  
December 24.



SOCIAL NEWS

The Prince Edward will visit Japan from Monday, January 19, to Saturday, January 24, to open the UK 98 Festival.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY: Miss Anne Armstrong, former American diplomat, 70; Viscount Astor, 46; Sir Gordon Branton, former president, International Thomson Organisation, 76; Mr Gerard Depardieu, actor, 49; Lord Griffiths of Forestfach, 56; Air Chief Marshal Sir Derek Hodgkinson, 80; Viscount Knutsford, 71; Miss Pat Moss, former rally driver, 63; Professor D.H. Northcote, FRS, former Master, Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, 76; Sir William Purves, banker, 66; Professor B.R. Rees, former Principal, St David's University College, Lampeter, 78; Sir Norman Reid, former director, Tate Gallery, 82; Dr E.C. Salthouse, Master, University College, Durham, 62; Lord Sterling of Plaistow, 63; Miss Janet Street-Porter, broadcaster, 51; Miss Polly Toynbee, journalist and broadcaster, 51; the Right Rev A.M.A. Turnbull, Bishop of Durham, 62.

TOMORROW: Air Commodore Molly Allott, former director, WRAF, 79; Mr D.B. Carr, former cricketer, 71; Miss Madeleine Craggs, former secretary, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 52; Mr T.W. Gould, VC, 83; Mr Max Hastings, Editor, Evening Standard, 52; Lord Hanterley, 65; Mr Noel Johnson, actor, 81; Professor F.P. Kelly, FRS, statistician, 47; Mr Nigel Kennedy, violinist, 41; Mr Martin Llowarch, chairman, Transport Development Group, 62; Mr Michael J.E. Marks, deputy chairman, Merrill Lynch International, and chief operating officer, Merrill Lynch Europe and the Middle East, 56; Mr Michael Marland, educationist, 63; Mrs Frances Morrell, former leader, ILEA, 60; Sir Patrick O'Connor, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 83; Mr Simon Raven, author and dramatist, 70; Mrs Joan Ruddock, MP, 54; Dame Maggie Smith, actress, 63; Mr Denzel Washington, actor, 43; the Right Rev W.J. Westwood, former Bishop of Peterborough, 72; the Hon Geoffrey Wilson, former chairman, Delta Group, 68; the Marquess of Zetland, 60.

Anniversaries

TODAY: BIRTHS: Johannes Kepler, astronomer, Weil der Stadt, Germany, 1571; Sir George Cayley, pioneer of aerodynamics, Scarborough, 1773; Louis Pasteur, chemist and bacteriologist, Dole, France, 1822.

DEATHS: Pierre de Ronsard, poet, Tours, 1585; George Barrington, pickpocket and writer, Parramatta, New South Wales, 1804; William Jay, dissenting minister, Bath, 1833; William Armstrong, Baron Armstrong, inventor, Northumberland, 1900; William Archer, journalist and dramatic critic, London, 1924; Sergey Yesenin, poet, Leningrad, 1925; Max Beckmann, Expressionist painter, New York, 1950; Lester Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada 1963-68, Nobel Peace laureate 1957, Ottawa, 1972; Houari Boumedienne, President of Algeria 1965-78, Algiers, 1978; Hoagy Carmichael, pianist and composer, Palm Springs, California, 1981.

Charles Darwin set sail in HMS Beagle from Plymouth on his voyage of scientific discovery, 1831.

The first performance of J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan took place at the Duke of York's Theatre, London, 1904.

The International Monetary Fund was established, Washington, 1945.

The Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts came into effect in Britain, 1975.

TOMORROW: BIRTHS: Alexander Keith Johnston, geographer, Penicuik, 1804; Samuel Phillips, journalist, 1814; Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th American President 1913-21, Staunton, Virginia, 1856; Pio Baroja y Nessi, novelist, San Sebastian, Spain, 1872; Sir Arthur Eddington, astronomer, Kendal, Cumbria, 1882.

DEATHS: St Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church, 1622; Queen Mary II, reigned with King William III, 1689-94, London, 1694; Pierre Bayle, philosopher, 1706; Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron Macaulay, poet, historian and statesman, London, 1859; George Gissing, novelist, St Jean de Luz, France, 1903; Maurice Ravel, composer, Paris, 1937; Theodore Dreiser, novelist, Hollywood, 1945; Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy 1900-46, Egypt, 1947; Jack Lovecock, surgeon, Olympic 1500m gold medalist 1936, killed in an accident, New York, 1949; Paul Hindemith, composer, Frankfurt am Main, 1963.

The Tay Bridge collapsed as a train from Edinburgh to Dundee was crossing it, killing all 300 on board, 1879.

The first weather reports relayed by wireless telegraphy were published in London, 1904.

The Peak District was designated Britain's first National Park, 1950.

Latest wills

Sir Charles Spencer Richard Graham, 81, former Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria, President of County Landowners Association 1971-73, of Longtown, Carlisle, left estate valued at £434,613 net.

Sir David Armand Hopkins, of London, 87, Chief Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate, 1932-42, President of the British Board of Control from 1991, left estate valued at £228,780 net.

Queenie May Bowerman, of Haver, Wiltshire, left estate valued at £114,273 net.

Sarah Bright, of Bourne, Leicestershire, left estate valued at £1,747,048 net.

Dennis Clifford Duckitt, stockbroker, of Wyke Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, left estate valued at £1,796,333 net.

William Alfred Colledge, of Chesham, Bucks, left estate valued at £1,121,121 net.

He left £2,000 to the Macmillan Cancer Society of Chesham, £1,000 to RSPCA.

Alister Congreve Hall, farmer, of Hales, Market Drayton, Shropshire, left estate valued at £1,500,726 net.

Michael Douglas Sutcliffe Hood, of Waltham, West Sussex, left estate valued at £1,071,428 net.

Margaret Owen Gordon Adkin, of Sheffield, left estate valued at £554,010 net.

Edmund Garvey, of Scarborough, left estate valued at £539,939 net.

David Mitchell, of Asparica, Cumbria, left estate valued at £944,282 net.



Tracey Holman and Simon Bentley, of southwest London, who have recently announced their engagement

University news

**Oxford**

Somerville College: The following elections have been agreed: To a Bull Scholarship in Classics: Alan Brendan Connerly (formerly of Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, London). To a Coombs Scholarship in PPE: Stefan Dobrev, Sofia High School of Mathematics. To an Ethel E Jones Scholarship in English: Rachel Curzon, Boston Spa Comprehensive, W York. To a Nuffield Scholarship in Engineering: Claire Louise Williams, Mander Portman Woodward, Cambs. To a Nuffield Scholarship in Chemistry: Arran Alexander Dickson Tulloch, Bedales School. To a Nuffield Scholarship in Chemistry: David Willman, University College School, London. To a Beilby Exhibition in Physics: Benjamin Russell Booth, Dean Close School. To a Beilby Exhibition in Human Sciences: James Patrick Curley, St Peter's School, York. To a Beilby Exhibition in Human Sciences: Charlotte Marie Dufour, Lyce International, France. To a Beilby Exhibition in Human Sciences: Jonathan Alexander Dickson Tulloch, and Tak Yan Chung, Thomas Mills High School, Suffolk.

**London**

King's College London: Appointments to Established Chairs: Sarah Cowley to the newly established Chair of Nursing Practice and Evaluation. She was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Nursing Studies at King's. David Gantz to the Chair of Palaeography. He joins King's from the University of North Carolina, USA, and is the leading world authority on the manuscripts produced as a result of the Carolingian renaissance. Ian Norman to the newly established Chair of Nursing Practice and Inter-Disciplinary Care. He was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Nursing Studies at King's.

Appointments to Personal Chairs: Janet Ashman, Senior Research Fellow in the Age Concern Institute of Gerontology to Professor of Social Gerontology. Robert Blackburn, Reader in Public Law to Professor of Constitutional Law. Clive Bush, Head of the Department of English and Reader in American Literature, to Professor of American Literature. Head of the Department of War Studies and Senior Lecturer in War Studies, to Professor of Military Sociology. Michael Holwell, Reader in Biophysics, to Professor of Biological Physics. Gareth Jones, Reader in Cell Biology, to Professor of Cell Biology. Giovanni Mann, Reader in Physiology to Professor of Vascular Physiology. Yuri Safarov, Reader in Mathematics to Professor of Mathematics.

Peter Williams, Senior Lecturer in Zoology, to Professor of Environmental Science.

Appointments to Newly Established Readerships: Cliff Eison to a newly established Readership in Historical Musicology. He joins King's from New York University. Daniel Leach-Wilkinson to a newly established Readership in Historical Musicology. He joins King's from the University of Southampton.

Promotions to Reader: Dr Karin Arafat, Lecturer in Classical Archaeology to Reader in Classical Archaeology. Dr Julian Baird, Lecturer in Islamic Studies, to Reader in Islamic Studies. Dr Ingvar Bjarnason, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Pathology to Reader in Clinical Pathology. Dr Helen Fielding, Lecturer in Chemistry to Reader in Physical Chemistry. Dr James Gow, Lecturer in War Studies to Reader in War Studies. Dr Tom Kenyon, Senior Lecturer in Management to Reader in Management. Dr Max Saunders, Lecturer in English to Reader in English. Dr Lakmal Senarathne, Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering to Reader in Mechanical Engineering. Dr David Squires, Senior Lecturer in Educational Computing to Reader in Educational Computing. Dr Alan Turner-Smith, Senior Lecturer in Medical Engineering and Physics to Reader in Rehabilitation Engineering.

Britannia Royal Naval College

A passing out parade was held at Britannia Royal Naval College (Commodore A.P. Masterson Smith) on Thursday, December 18, Rear Admiral M.J. Franklyn, Flag Officer, Surface Flotilla (FOSF), took the salute. The following officers passed out: Direct Graduate Entry, Seamen: Sub-Lieutenants S.R. Bembidge, Winttingham Sch, Grimsby; E.N. Chadsfield, Solihull Sch, West Midlands; N.J. Colin-Thomson, Frodsham High Sch, Cheshire; A.J. Collins, The Lindsey Sch, Cleveland; A.C. Cooney, Nottingham Bluecoat Sch, Aspley; A.D. Coventry, George Watson College, Edinburgh; W.D.J. Dale, The King's Sch, Worcester; J.P. Delf, Denham, Christ's Hospital Sch, Herts; P.L. Downing, St Monica's Roman Catholic High Sch, Preshaw; M.J. Downs, Light Hall Sch, Solihull; M.J. Hall, Capetown Comprehensive Sch, Newport; R.V. D.T. Ravenscroft, Bolnisi Comprehensive Sch, Warwick; G.J. McGowan, Horsforth Sch, Leeds; R.J. Melhuish, Plymouth College, Devon; P.G. Monaghan, Margaret Academy, Ayr; A.T. Norgate, Southway Comprehensive Sch, Plymouth; J.O'Neill, Cardigan Secondary Sch, Ceredigion; A.E. Pollard, The Lady Eleanor Holmes Sch, Middlesex; B.D.T. Ravenscroft, Bolnisi Comprehensive Sch, Warwick; S.J.P. Rogers, Seaford Head Sch, East Sussex; N.E.P. Smith, Maidstone Grammar Sch, Kent; M. Thomas, Ludlow Sch, Shropshire; D.A. Thomas, Clipping Solly Sch, Bristol; A.R. Towns, King Edward VI Grammar Sch, Chelmsford; G.R. Williams, Westlands Sch, Torquay.

Naval College Entry, Seamen: Midshipmen K.S. Pyle, Harncliffe Academy, Halesworth; V.M. Goughie, Salswell Comprehensive Sch, South Glamorgan; A.G. Peacock, Purley Sixth Form College, Surrey; D.A. Wadhall, High Street Sch, Tayside.

Direct Graduate Entry, Engineer: Sub-Lieutenants R.S. Singh, Reading Sch, Berkshire; M.L. Thomas, Heaton Master Sch, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Naval College Entry, Engineers: Midshipmen M.R. Jones, Priestlands Sch, Lymington; A.R. Lovett, Kilsyth Academy, Kilsyth; B.D. Trueman, Park View Sch, Birmingham.

Direct Graduate Entry, Engineer (Training Management): Lieutenant A.M. Roberts, KGV College, Southampton; Sub-Lieutenant M.D. Clarke, St Vincent VI Form College, Gosport.

Direct Graduate Entry, Supply: Sub-Lieutenants P.J. Miles, The Purbeck Upper Sch, Wareham; I.D. Park, Aspley High Sch, Seaton Delaval.

Naval College Entry, Supply: Midshipman A.C. Bishop, Humphry Davy Sch, Penzance; C.L. Clark, Crofton Sch, Fareham; C.L. Howe, Parkstone Grammar Sch, for Girls, Poole; K.J. Rawlings, The Ridgeway Sch, Swindon; B.S. Wrigley, Coliste Muire, Co.Cork.

Direct Graduate Entry, 89 Flight Pilot: Sub-Lieutenants N.J. Arkle, Ranelagh Sch, Bracknell; J.M. Ashlin, Nicholas Chamberlaine Comprehensive Sch, Bedford; S.A.H. Baldie, Barton Peveril VI Form, Eastleigh; N.J.E. Benzie, Cranleigh Sch, Surrey; L.F. Brazier, Newcastle Royal Grammar Sch, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; J. Cowin, Cranleigh Sch, Surrey; K.N. Dredge, Sidmouth Community College, Devon; A.C. Ellis, Newcastle Emlyn Comprehensive, Dyfed; A.W. Fellers, Barden High Sch, Burnley; P.E. Hanks, Birkenhead Sch, Oxton; B.P.I. Hartley, Oakham Sch, Rutland; S.J. Johnston, Haver Academy, Dundee; G. McCall, The St Augustine's Sch, Reddish; G.K. Stein, Gordonstoun Sch, Moray; A.T. Torbet, Harlaw Academy, Aberdeen; J.M.R. Wade, Tonbridge Sch, Kent; A. Walsh, Mark Rutherford Sch, Bedford.

Naval College Entry, 89 Flight Pilot: Midshipman M.R. Paulet, St John's College, Zimbabwe.

Direct Graduate Entry, 89 Flight Observer: Sub-Lieutenants D.J. Hiff, St John Houghton Roman Catholic Sch, Bristol; A.S. Johnston, Lancing College, Shoreham-by-Sea; M.R. Tazewell, Kingdon Comprehensive, Warrminster.

Naval College Entry, 89 Flight Observer: Midshipman C.Y. Moncrieff-Watts, Bristol Grammar Sch, Clifton.

Direct Entry, 89 Flight (Air Traffic Controller): Sub-Lieutenants I. Griffin, St Paul's Sch for Girls, Edgbaston; J.L. Younger, Ranelagh Sch, Scarborough.

Naval College Entry, 89 Flight (Air Traffic Controller): Midshipmen Z. Kroon, Newland Sch for Girls, Hull; D.R. Pickles, The Ferrers Sch, Northampton.

International Entry 97/2: Midshipmen A.H.M. Al-Yaqout, Salah Al-Ajmi Saud, T.A.H. Al-Farisi, M.S.A. Al-Harbi, M.A. Harshani, F.A.M. Al-Qunaitan, Chattrachulchai, Choo Jui Yang.

Special Duties Course, 39/97: Lieutenant N.C. Burley, Ballymurn Comprehensive, Dublin; J. Hall, Clarendon Sch, Salford; Sub-Lieutenant G.J. Boon, Llandudno Fawr Sch, South Glamorgan; F. Brown, Landmark Baptist Sch, United States of America; D. Castle, Oulton Longville Comprehensive Sch, Peterborough; M.H. Connolly, Greenfield Sch, Gwent; A.R. Cowan, Greenford High Sch, Middlesex; S.E. Goodrum, Latford Comprehensive, Basildon; P.J. Gough, Ashcroft High Sch, Luton; S.M. Howells, Cefn Hengoed Comprehensive Sch, Swansea; T.W. Longstaff, Queen Elizabeth High Sch, Northumberland; H.W. Lynn, Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Sch, Luton; Lieutenant G.A. Miles, Knowley St Augustine's, Canterbury; M. Murrey, Robinson Road Sch, New Providence; A. Parson, Holgate Sch, Barnsley; J. Pirrie, Inverness Royal Academy, Inverness; J.D. Smith, Eastingwold Comprehensive Sch, Eastingwold; G.E. Stringer, Garsington Comprehensive Sch, Oxford; R.S. Walker, Lymington Secondary Modern, Cheshire; G.J. Wilson, St Davids High Sch, Chester.

THE QUEEN ON SETTING WORLD AN EXAMPLE

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first radio message to the Commonwealth by her grandfather, King George V, the Queen was televised while making her traditional Christmas Day broadcast to her peoples.

The Queen said in her broadcast: "Happy Christmas. Twenty-five years ago my grandfather broadcast the first of these Christmas messages. Today is another landmark because television has made it possible for many of you to see me in your homes on Christmas Day. My own family often gather round to watch television as they are at this moment, and that is how I imagine you now. I very much hope that this new medium will make my Christmas message more personal and direct. It is inevitable that I should seem a rather remote figure to many of you - a successor to the kings and queens of history; someone whose face may be familiar in newspapers and films but who never really touches your personal lives. But now at least for a few minutes, I welcome you to the peace of my own home.

That it is possible for some of you to see me today is just another example of the speed at which our lives are changing all around us. Because of these changes I am not surprised

ON THIS DAY December 27, 1957

Forty years ago the Queen gave her first Christmas Day message on television. She was then 31 years of age in the fourth year of her reign.

That many people feel lost and unable to decide what to hold on to and what to discard, how to take advantage of the new life without losing the best of the old.

But it is not the new inventions which are the difficulty. The trouble is caused by unthinking people who carelessly throw away ageless ideals as if they were old and outworn machinery. They would have religion thrown aside, morality in personal and public life made meaningless, honesty counted as foolishness and self-interest set up in place of self-restraint.

At this critical moment in our history we must certainly lose the trust and respect of the world if we abandon these fundamental principles which guided the men and women who

built the greatness of this country and Commonwealth. To-day we need a special kind of courage, not the kind needed in battle, but a kind which makes us stand up for everything that we know is right, everything that is true and honest. We need the kind of courage that can withstand the subtle corruption of the cynic, so that we can show the world that we are not afraid of the future.

In the old days the monarch led his soldiers on to the battlefield and his leadership at all times was close and personal. To-day things are very different. I cannot lead you into battle. I do not give you laws or administer justice. But I can do something else. I can give you my heart and my devotion to these old islands and to all the peoples of our brotherhood of nations.

I believe in our qualities and in our strength. I believe that together we can set an example to the world which will encourage upright people everywhere.

I would like to read you a few lines from Pilgrim's Progress because I am sure we can say with Mr Valiant for Truth, these words: "Though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me to be a witness for me that I have fought his battles who now will be my reward."



The Queen recording her televised Christmas Day message from Sandringham last year

BMDS: 0171 680 6880  
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982  
FAX: 0171 481 9313

**DEATHS**

**COURTNEY** - Richard (A.C. Courtney) of Bury, died 23rd December 1997, aged 81. He was a devoted husband of 50 years to Joan Courtney. He is survived by his wife Joan, daughter, Mrs. Joan Courtney, and son, Mr. Richard Courtney. Burial at Bury Crematorium on Monday, January 6, 1998, at 11.30 am.

**MADON** - On December 20th, 1997, at his home, 21st Avenue, Harold, died peacefully after a long illness. He was a devoted husband of 40 years to Margaret Madon. He is survived by his wife Margaret, daughter, Mrs. Margaret Madon, and son, Mr. Richard Madon. Burial at Bury Crematorium on Monday, January 6, 1998, at 11.30 am.

**LLOYD** - On December 22nd, 1997, at his home, 21st Avenue, Harold, died peacefully after a long illness. He was a devoted husband of 40 years to Margaret Lloyd. He is survived by his wife Margaret, daughter, Mrs. Margaret Lloyd, and son, Mr. Richard Lloyd. Burial at Bury Crematorium on Monday, January 6, 1998, at 11.30 am.

**MAY** - On December 21st, 1997, at the Portland Hospital, to Miss May (née Bowerman), of Haver, Wiltshire, left estate valued at £1,747,048 net.

**STONE** - On December 20th, 1997, at the Portland Hospital, to Miss Stone (née Bowerman), of Haver, Wiltshire, left estate valued at £1,747,048 net.

**DEATHS**

**BURROUGHS** - On December 21st, 1997, at his home, 21st Avenue, Harold, died peacefully after a long illness. He was a devoted husband of 40 years to Margaret Burroughs. He is survived by his wife Margaret, daughter, Mrs. Margaret Burroughs, and son, Mr. Richard Burroughs. Burial at Bury Crematorium on Monday, January 6, 1998, at 11.30 am.

**DEATHS**

**BURROUGHS** - On December 21st, 1997, at his home, 21st Avenue, Harold, died peacefully after a long illness. He was a devoted husband of 40 years to Margaret Burroughs. He is survived by his wife Margaret, daughter, Mrs. Margaret Burroughs, and son, Mr. Richard Burroughs. Burial at Bury Crematorium on Monday, January 6, 1998, at 11.30 am.

**SERVICES**

**LET** - The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium. The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium.

**TICKETS FOR SALE**

**ALL** - Tickets for sale at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium. Tickets for sale at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium.

**FOR SALE**

**LET** - The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium. The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium.

**LEGAL NOTICES**

**PROMOTE CITIZENSHIP** - The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium. The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium.

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**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**

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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**GRANTY** - The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium. The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CHILDREN ON DIALYSIS** - The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium. The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CHILDREN ON DIALYSIS** - The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium. The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday, January 6, 1998, at Bury Crematorium.

**THE TIMES**

**CHRISTMAS PERIOD**

**Birth, Marriage & Death Notices**

The office is open today from 9.00 am to 11.30 am to book notices to appear in The Times on Monday December 27th.

Tel: 0171 680 6880

**COURT & SOCIAL**

**FORTECOMING MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGES**

Over the New Year period the following notices will apply:

Notices for: Tuesday December 29th; Wednesday December 30th; Thursday December 31st; Friday January 1st; Saturday January 2nd; Sunday January 3rd; Monday January 4th; Tuesday January 5th; Wednesday January 6th; Thursday January 7th; Friday January 8th; Saturday January 9th; Sunday January 10th; Monday January 11th; Tuesday January 12th; Wednesday January 13th; Thursday January 14th; Friday January 15th; Saturday January 16th; Sunday January 17th; Monday January 18th; Tuesday January 19th; Wednesday January 20th; Thursday January 21st; Friday January 22nd; Saturday January 23rd; Sunday January 24th; Monday January 25th; Tuesday January 26th; Wednesday January 27th; Thursday January 28th; Friday January 29th; Saturday January 30th; Sunday January 31st; Monday February 1st; Tuesday February 2nd; Wednesday February 3rd; Thursday February 4th; Friday February 5th; Saturday February 6th; Sunday February 7th; Monday February 8th; Tuesday February 9th; Wednesday February 10th; Thursday February 11th; 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OBITUARIES

# MILESTONES OF THE YEAR

**JANUARY**  
Randy California, rock star, died on January 2 aged 45. Having impressed Jimi Hendrix with his guitar-playing at 15, and playing with his band for three months, he formed the group Spirit. *I Got a Line on You* was a hit in 1969, and there were several "concept" albums, notably *Captain Kopter* and *The Fabulous Twirlybirds*.

Sandor Vegh, violinist, died on January 8 aged 91. After playing in the Hungarian and Vegh Quartets, he collaborated famously with Casals, Menuhin and Richter. Character, excitement and insight meant much more to him than technical perfection, which he dismissed as "the McDonald's school of music-making".

Myfanwy Piper, art critic and librettist, died on January 18 aged 85. She wrote three operas with Benjamin Britten. She was married to the artist John Piper for more than 50 years, as well as being an



early muse and longstanding friend of John Benjamin.

"Colonel" Tom Parker, Elvis Presley's agent, died on January 21 aged 87. Born in The Netherlands, Parker stowed away to America when he was 16 and worked in circuses and advertising. As a promoter in the Deep South, he once ran a troupe of dancing chickens, but then, in 1955, he met Elvis. He arranged a new recording contract, and exercised total control. His exorbitant share of the takings from records and merchandising was revealed only on Presley's death in 1977 when the family sued him for fraud and mismanagement.

Colla Welch, journalist, died on January 27 aged 72. He established the *Daily Telegraph* column "The Way of the World" in 1957, and as that paper's deputy editor he was the organising mind behind its stand of free market conservatism from 1964 to 1980.

Pamela Harriman, the English rose who became American Ambassador to France, died on February 5 aged 76. She was famous for her love affairs and marriages. After her divorce from Randolph Churchill she had a succession of liaisons, notably with Averell Harriman, Ed Murrow, Prince Aly Khan and Gianni Agnelli before marrying the Broadway musical producer Leland Hayward in 1960. Six months after his death in 1971 she married Harriman as his third wife. He died in 1986, leaving her at least \$66 million, though his daughters were left only \$4,000 each. She was the mother of the present Winston Churchill.

Brian Connolly, singer with the 1970s glam-rock group Sweet, died on February 10 aged 47. With hits such as *Little Willy* and *Teenage Rampage*, Sweet achieved all the trappings of pop stardom. At one time Connolly had six Rolls-Royces. Heavy drinking, however, led to heart attacks, partial paralysis, the end of his marriage, and sad attempts to relieve his glory



days by peddling nostalgic ironies in clubs and holiday camps.

Deng Xiaoping, China's "paramount leader", died on February 19 aged 92. After surviving the disapproval of Chairman Mao during the 1950s and 1960s, Deng fought his way to the top of the Communist Party in 1978. He set China on a new course of economic reform — abolishing Mao's people's communes — and began to open it up to the world. His methods, however, remained authoritarian, as was seen by the world when pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square were attacked by soldiers with considerable loss of life.

**MARCH**  
Michael Manley, three times Prime Minister of Jamaica, died on March 8 aged 72. He was originally a hardline socialist, who tried to align Jamaica with Castro's Cuba and solve the problems of the slums by spending. But by his last term of office, 1989-92, he saw that poverty would better be overcome by investment from the United States, and even by Thatcherite privatisations.

Dame Veronica Wedgwood, OM, historian of the 17th century, died on March 9 aged 86. Her early books on *The Thirty Years War* and *William the Silent* were published to clamorous applause. She was especially known for her work on the Great Rebellion, and *The Trial of Charles I* was a bestseller. She also wrote biographies of Cromwell, Richelieu, Milton and Rubens.

Fred Zinnemann, film director, died on March 14 aged 89. The man behind *High Noon*, *From Here to Eternity*, *Oklahoma!* and *Days of the Jackal*, won two awards for best director, two best picture Oscars and three Golden Globes.

Willem de Kooning, painter, died on March 19 aged 92. He made his name in the 1940s and 1950s, along with Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. Their school of Abstract Expressionism made them fashionable and famous, but de Kooning never learnt to relax. Frenzied painting and palimpsesting alternated with depression, drink and eventually Alzheimer's disease, which cast doubt on the status of his last works. His *Pink Lady* (1944) set a record price for a living artist in 1987, fetching \$3.6 million at auction.

The Rev W. Awdry, creator of Thomas the Tank Engine, died on March 21 aged 85. Like his father, he was a lifelong enthusiast for railways, both full-scale and model. He first told his stories when his son Christopher was recovering from measles, and the first book, *The Three Railway Engines* was published the day after VE-Day. From 1948 until 1972 he produced a book a year. The stories have been read as satire and accused of racial and sexual stereotyping. They are about railway engines.

Sir Victor Pritchett, author, died on March 20 aged 96. Although he was an all-round man of letters, writing book reviews for the *New Statesman* for nearly 50 years, V. S. Pritchett was best known for his short stories. He wrote about



the burdens borne by lower-middle-class people in keeping up appearances. His sympathies were wide, as was shown by his two volumes of autobiography, *A Cab at the Door* and *Midnight Oil*.

Allen Ginsberg, poet, died on April 5 aged 70. "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked," began *Howl*, with which Ginsberg claimed his place in the Beat generation in 1956. A brilliant, wayward student, he spent time in an asylum where he took drugs and claimed that God had spoken to him while he was reading Blake. His poems and performances ran on and on, and he became a travelling phenomenon. He was commended by William Carlos Williams, toured with Bob Dylan (who trusted his judgment) and played *Yellow Submarine* to Ezra Pound (who tapped his stick).

Helene Hauff, writer, died on April 9 aged 80. Her fame rested on a single book, *84 Charing Cross Road*, a correspondence between herself in her days as a writer and television scripts in New York and the London secondhand bookshop Marks & Co. Received with nostalgic rapture, it eventually became a film, starring Anthony Hopkins.

Denis Compton, cricketer, died on April 23, aged 78. He scored his first century at Lord's at 14, and was playing for England at 19. Touring Australia in 1946-47 he scored four successive centuries, and in the English summer of 1947 he scored 3,616 (average: 90.85). In 1950 he was part of the Arsenal squad that won the FA Cup. His 38,635 first-class runs included 122 centuries, and he took 613 wickets. He also advertised Brylcreem.

Lord Taylor of Gosforth, lawyer, died on April 28 aged 66. From the time he was appointed Lord Chief Justice in 1992, Lord Taylor saw his



role as one of defending the independence of the judiciary against the encroachments of both the executive and the legislature. His battles with the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, were fought amid great publicity. In particular, he resisted the introduction of compulsory life sentences for those convicted of some sexual and violent offences for a second time.

Sir John Junor, former Editor of the *Sunday Express*, died on May 3 aged 78. He had ruled the paper for 32 years, during which time its circulation plunged from 4½ million to less than 2½ million. His own column, latterly in the *Mail on Sunday*, last appeared the week before his death. Gruff, phillistine and reactionary, it was often attacked by exactly the kinds of *bien pensants* he most loathed.

Hughie Green, TV presenter of *Opportunity Knocks*, died on May 3 aged 77. He genuinely enjoyed discovering talent, and his show helped to launch Les Dawson, Mary Hopkin, Little and Large and Pam Ayres. But his gushing geniality, also evident on *Double Your Money*, began to grate and *Opportunity Knocks* was dropped in 1978. At his funeral it was announced that opportunity had once knocked for him and that he had an illegitimate child, who recently turned out to be Paula Yates.

Laurie Lee, author, died on May 13 aged 83. He was famous not as a poet, as he had always hoped, but for *Cider With Rosie* (1959), a somewhat winsome tale of youthful seduction in Gloucestershire's Slad Valley. The secret of the identity of Rosie went with him to the grave.

Doie Cheatham, jazz trumpeter, died on June 2 aged 91, after a career spanning almost the entire history of recorded jazz.

Ronnie Lane, pop musician, died on June 5 aged 51. Lane first enjoyed success with the Small Faces, stalwarts of the 1960s Mod scene who went on to develop their own quirky brand of psychedelia. Transformed into the Faces, dominated by the strutting ego of the singer Rod Stewart, they enjoyed a string of hits in the early 1970s. Lane struck out on his own in 1973. He did some well-regarded solo work and pursued his dream of a rock circus with jugglers and fire-eaters but in 1977 he began to suffer from multiple sclerosis.

Helen Jacobs, American tennis player, died on June 2 aged 88. Her Wimbledon title of 1936 followed four successive American national titles. Her career was a prolonged struggle against the machine-like Helen Wills. Their most dramatic match was at Forest Hills in 1933. Wills had not lost a match since 1926, nor even a set since 1927. Jacobs won the first set 8-6, lost the second 6-3 and was 3-0 up in the third when Wills withdrew complaining of injury, though announcing her intention to play in

the doubles final. In all Jacobs won nine Grand Slam titles.

Jacques-Yves Cousteau, underwater explorer and film-maker, died on June 25 aged 87. He single-handedly popularised marine science, pioneering scuba equipment, small manoeuvrable submarines and underwater cinematography. Audiences were rapt in 1955 to discover *The Silent World*, with remarkable sequences of dolphins filmed from a hollow dome beneath the bow of his converted minesweeper *Calypso*. The subsequent book sold 5 million copies.

Charlie Chester, comedian, died on June 26 aged 83. One of the last relics of the music hall, he had been a star of radio, the variety theatre and television. He presented British television's first give-away gameshow, *Take Pot Luck* (first



prize: a set on which to watch the show), and in 1969 he began his long running radio programme *Sunday Soapbox*, which helped people to trace long-lost friends.

Robert Mitchum, film actor, died on July 1 aged 79. He once said that he had two acting styles: with a horse and without. He made about 100 films, from *The Story of G.I. Joe*, which won him an Oscar nomination, to *Ryan's Daughter* and both versions of *Cape Fear*. His typically tough, hard-drinking persona became a screen legend.

James Stewart, the archetype hero in three decades of westerns, died on July 2 aged 89. In his early days he played opposite Marlene Dietrich, Eleanor Powell and Margaret Sullivan. His first classic western was *Destry Rides Again* in 1939. In 1984 he was rewarded by a special Academy Award for "50 years of meaningful performances".

Gianni Versace, fashion designer, was shot dead, aged 50, at Miami Beach on July 15. His first signed collection of women's clothes appeared in 1978, and he went on, as a rival to Armani, to open showrooms in Paris, London and Berlin as well as Milan. The vast appearance fees he paid sent the cost of supermodels soaring. The dress of his in which Liz Hurley appeared in 1994 did the same for pulse-rates.

Ben Hogan, perhaps the greatest golfer of all time, died on July 25 aged 84. Relentless practice and

determination made him four times winner of the US Open. Three of those victories came after the car crash in 1949 which doctors had said would finish his career. In 1953 he won the British Open by five strokes, the US Masters by four and the US Open by six — lowering the championship record total for the Oakmont course by 16 strokes. If there is such a thing as golfing genius, this was it.

Viscount Tonypandy, George Thomas, former Speaker of the House of Commons, died on September 22 aged 88. As the first Speaker in the era of parliamentary sound broadcasting, he won national renown with his calls of "Order, order". He was first elected as the leaving Labour MP for Cardiff South in 1950, but his later public image was that of a mellow, impartial and kindly man. After his death, this was challenged by accusations of snobbery, condescension and even cruelty.

Sir James Goldsmith, tycoon, died on July 19 aged 64. When he was 15 he won £8,000 on an accumulator bet, walked out of Eton and set off on the trail of acquisition and abandon that was to make him a billionaire and a classically successful womaniser. In 1987 he sold his assets just before the global stockmarket crash, and thereafter he dedicated himself to conservation and, latterly, to opposing European integration. He founded and funded the Referendum Party but won little support, losing his own deposit at Putney in May.

**AUGUST**

Svyatoslav Richter, concert pianist, died on August 1 aged 82. One of the great interpreters of the century, he was also famous for his "no-shows": if he did not feel up to playing his best, audiences had to settle for nothing at all.

William Burroughs, author, died on August 2 aged 83. After post-graduate work at Harvard he rejected bourgeois life and entered



the demi-monde that was to shape his life, working as a bartender, rat-catcher and private detective (not necessarily all at once). In the early 1950s he became addicted to drugs, travelling the world in search of better fixes. After cold turkey in London, he wrote *The Naked Lunch* (1959), an aleatory, anarchic fantasy about addiction and homosexuality. Its violence, scatology and sadism brought a

temporary ban in America. He never looked back.

Carel Weight, painter, died on August 13 aged 88. He was a very English eccentric — like Stanley Spencer or L.S. Lowry — who found the fantastic within the apparently banal. He showed mystery, even tragedy, beneath life's grimy surfaces. His work had nothing in common with the abstract schools that dominated most of his lifetime, but had been increasingly appreciated during the past 15 years.

Diana, Princess of Wales, died in Paris on August 31 aged 36. Her death eclipsed the business of nations. The child of a broken home, she made of her own pain a gift for others. It gave her a remarkable affinity with those who were suffering or lonely. From being a charming, slightly gawky girl when she entered public life with her marriage to the Prince of Wales in July 1981, she grew into a woman of dazzling beauty. But she will be remembered for brightening the lives of the sick, the destitute, victims of landmines, and especially children. The unhappy side of her life and of her manipulative approach to all publicity seem likely to be forgotten.

**SEPTEMBER**

Jeffrey Bernard, Soho's most famous drunk, died on September 4 aged 65. His journalism appeared most notably in *The Spectator*, but he gradually became not the reporter but the spectacle. His column about his exploits and ailments was described as "a suicide note in instalments", and in 1989 Keith Waterhouse had a West End hit with the dramatic entertainment *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell*.

H. J. Eysenck, writer on psychology, died on September 4 aged 81. His challenging and diverse work expanded the scope of psychological exploration, as well as popularising it. His ideas about intelligence quotient and the importance of genetics in the determining of character were attacked as politically insensitive, and he was accordingly marginalised within his profession.

Mother Teresa died on September 5 aged 87. After receiving the "call within a call" that led her to



dedicate herself for 50 years to the destitute of Calcutta, she became a guiding light for many, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Her emphasis on prayer and conversion rather than diagnosis was controversial, but she was widely regarded as a "living saint".

Sir Georg Solti, conductor, died on September 5 aged 84. He first studied under Bartok and Kodaly, and was encouraged by Toscanini. He made a recording of *Der Rosenkavalier* in Richard Strauss's presence and was enormously acclaimed for his live and recorded *Ring*, and for making the Chicago Symphony Orchestra the finest in America.

President Mobutu of Zaire died on September 7 aged 66. He had brutally misruled the former Congo for 32 years, presiding over a complete collapse of the economy while amassing a huge personal fortune.

General Sir John Hackett, former Commander-in-Chief of the British Army on the Rhine, died on September 9 aged 86. He won the MC, DSO and Bar during the Second World War, and after leaving the Army became Principal of King's College, London. He wrote the bestseller *The Third World War*.

**OCTOBER**

J. G. Links, expert on Canaletto and author of *Venice for Pleasure*, died on October 1 aged 92. His seductive guidebook wears its learning lightly, preferring a good café to yet another Titian, but Links's scholarship was of the first rank. After recognising a neglected Canaletto, he re-edited the *catalogue raisonné*, untangling numerous problems with the rigour of a detective.

A. L. Rowse, historian, died on October 3 aged 93. A proud and touchy man who published too many books, he was at his best on the Elizabethan period and when writing about his native Cornwall.

John Denver, singer-songwriter, died on October 12 aged 53 while

piloting his own plane. His extremely popular country and western songs included *Leaving on a Jet Plane*, *Country Roads* and *Rocky Mountain High*.

Harold Robbins, pulp novelist, died on October 14 aged 81. He achieved a winning formula with his fictionalised life of Howard



Hughes, *The Carpetbaggers* (1961), and his adept, downmarket variations on sex, power and money kept him at the top of the bestseller lists thereafter. He lived the fantasy life of one of his characters.

**NOVEMBER**

Joyce Wethered (Lady Heathcoat Amory), golfer, died on November 18 aged 96. Becoming English Ladies' Champion in 1920 when not quite 19, she held the title for five consecutive years and was four times winner of the British Ladies' Open.

Michael Hutchence, lead singer with INXS, was found dead in his hotel room in Sydney on November 22, aged 37. He was the closest Australia has come to producing a bad boy of rock. His band, originally the Farriss Brothers, formed in Sydney in 1977, toured widely, and became famous through videos made for MTV. Although INXS's music later became less fashionable, Hutchence remained a favourite of the gossip columns because of his affairs with actresses and models, and then his alliance with Paula Yates, with whom he had a daughter.

Hastings Banda, first President of Malawi, died on November 25. He was thought to be 99. After practicing as a GP in Willesden, he returned to his native land in 1958 and soon consolidated his power. He suppressed all opposition, sometimes brutally, but helped the country to make the most of its minimal resources. His links with South Africa were criticised, but in Malawi he was rightly regarded as father of the nation.

**DECEMBER**

Stephane Grappelli, jazz violinist, died on December 1, aged 89. Born in Paris, he was one of the first non-American musicians to make an impact in jazz. He played with Django Reinhardt from 1934 until the gypsy guitarist's death in 1953, and from 1971 he made many successful duet recordings with Yehudi Menuhin. He continued to perform almost to the end of his life, even when confined to a wheelchair.

Billy Bremner, soccer player, died on December 7 aged 54. He had won 54 caps for Scotland and almost every club honour in the game. His proudest moment perhaps came with Scotland's win over England, the world champions, in 1967. He was the fulcrum of Don Revie's Leeds United side for 17 years, from 1959 to 1976. He later became manager of Doncas-



ter and Leeds, but insufficient investment meant that success alluded him.

Woodrow Wyatt, politician, journalist and chairman of the Tote, died on December 7 aged 79. He first entered Parliament in 1945, on the left of the victorious Labour Party, but he was always a dandyish figure. He lost his seat in 1955 and was taken on by *Panorama*. He was an abrasive interviewer, and played his part in exposing the scandal in the ETU over balloting. He was ostracised by Labour, and became instead an ardent supporter of Margaret Thatcher, writing in *The Times* and as "The Voice of Reason" in the *News of the World*. Mrs Thatcher made him first a knight and then a peer. Always his own man, he ended up as virtually the only public advocate of John Major.







## SHOPPING



Winter coats: the long, tall and short of it

Page 5

## COMPETITION



Win a jeroboam in our property quiz

Page 10

## PETS



Is that a tiger cub on your sofa?

Page 13

## SALES



Our guide to the best deals around Britain

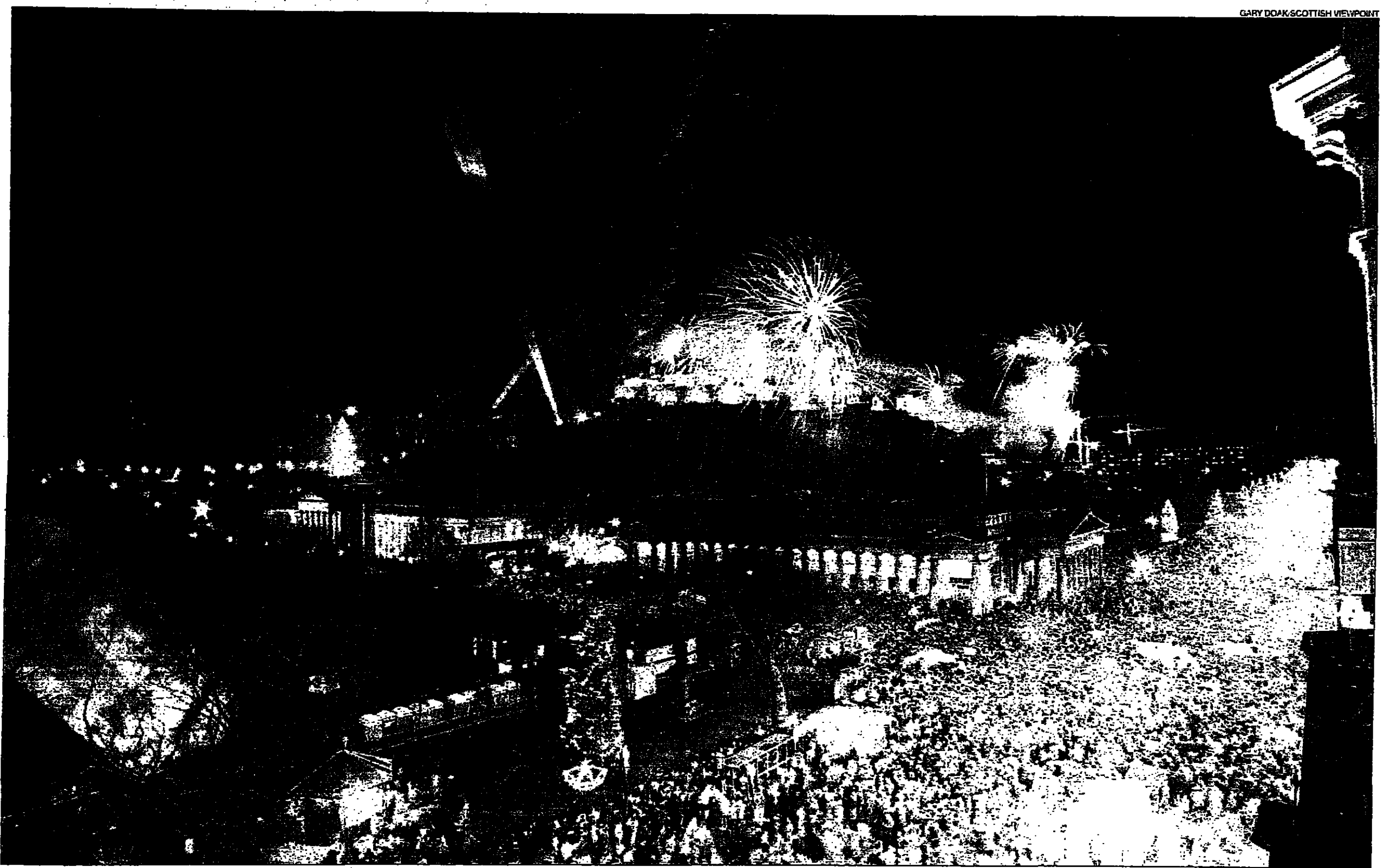
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THE TIMES

# WEEKEND

SATURDAY DECEMBER 27 1997

## Welcome to Scotland the rave



The streets of Edinburgh packed for Hogmanay. The inalienable right of the Scot to join his compatriots on New Year's Eve and imbibe himself into oblivion has been a phenomenon for as long as anyone can remember

Standing straight up, jammed between bodies, clutching a quarter bottle of Teacher's as the crowd sways backwards and forwards, the young man in the bomber jacket and the kilt at half-mast seems barely conscious. Something tuneless, more of a gargling sound than a song, emerges from his lips, half-blue with the cold — or possibly alcoholic poisoning. Then, as the New Year bells ring out, and a ragged chorus of *Auld Lang Syne* spreads through the massed ranks in Glasgow's George Square, the crowd parts and the young man pitches forwards, landing with perfect precision along the gutter, where he is, very suddenly, sick. "Welcome," says an anonymous voice, "tae the city o' culture."

### *Auld Lang Syne* meets thrash ceilidh and acid croft — Magnus Linklater reports on the changing face of Scotland's New Year celebrations

This was Glasgow 1990. But the scene could have come from any recent Hogmanay. Some traditions change — and none more rapidly than the way Scotland has begun to celebrate its annual festival of drink and exuberance. But the inalienable right of the Scot to join large numbers of his compatriots on New Year's Eve and imbibe himself into oblivion, has been a phenomenon for as long as anyone can remember. There is a dedication about it that is lacking south of the border. "Scottish people," wrote the

poet Edwin Muir, "drink spasmodically and intensely, for the sake of a momentary but complete release, whereas the English like to bathe and puddle about bucolically in a mild puddle of beer."

In 1878, Robert Louis Stevenson described a typical New Year in Edinburgh: "Singly or arm-in-arm, some speechless, others noisy and quarrelsome, the votaries of the New Year go meandering in and out, cannoning one against another; and now and then one falls and lies as he

has fallen. Before night, so many have gone to bed or the police office, that the streets seem almost clear."

In those days exchanging gifts of whisky and shortbread and a confection known as the Scots Bun — "heavy, black and inimical to health" as Stevenson described it — were part of the essential tradition. First-footers were always welcome, and if a dark-haired stranger bearing a bottle of whisky and a lump of coal was the first across your threshold, you could count on good luck for the whole of the year to come. My own memories of New Year's Eve in pre-breathalyser days are of long journeys in the country along ice-bound roads.

Continued on page 3

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## The John Lewis Clearance. It's like a sale, only better.

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JOHN LEWIS  
Department Stores

2 · feature

It's still two years off, but already the celebs are planning how to see in the new millennium, says Katherine Berger

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# Bubbly plans for new year 2000

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Mandelson: the man with a dome-sized headache

The Marquess of Bath and friends will celebrate at Longleat: "I have a partiality for table wine"

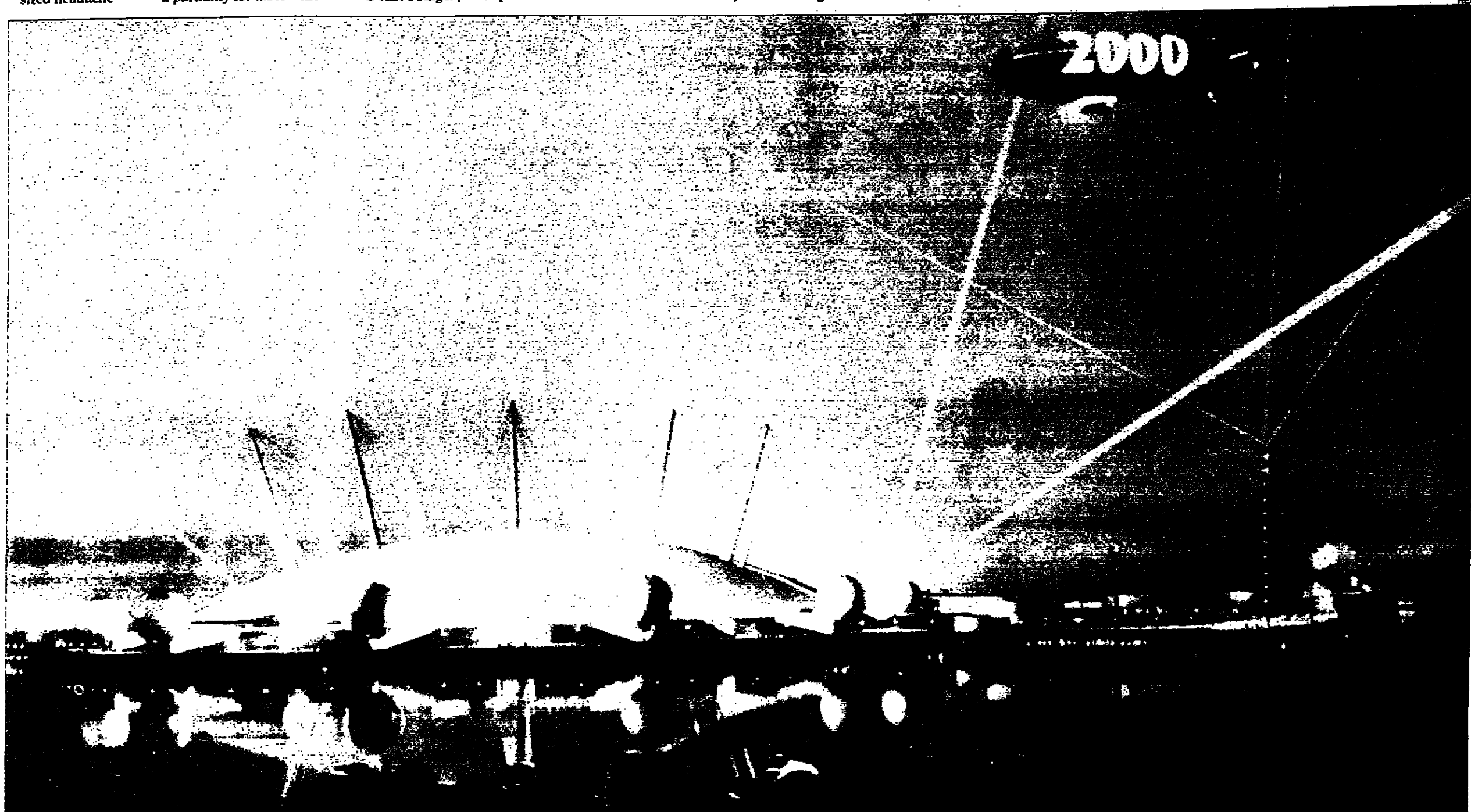
The Spice Girls (should they still be together in two years' time) say they want to sing *Wannabe* on the Millennium Dome's stage. (Oasis plan no further than their next album)

Richard Branson's plan to hire Edinburgh Castle for the night misfired

Harvey Goldsmith has hired the "other dome", the Albert Hall, for a rival do at £1,000 a guest

Baroness Castle: "I'm sick to death" of the millennium concept

Peter de Savary is holding a Norseman's night at Skibo Castle in Dornoch



The champagne night London is waiting for: the massive, £800 million Millennium Dome, lit up, bustling and, hopefully, hosting the Royal Family as, across the river from Greenwich, Big Ben booms in the Happy New Year 2000

There are those, such as Baroness (Barbara) Castle of Blackburn, who are not looking forward to the event at all. She says she is "sick to death" of the millennium. "It is the most artificial concept I've ever heard about. There's not going to be an explosion in the sky. What's so different about a date, for God's sake?"

Larry Adler, the octogenarian harmonica player, is just as caustic. "I thought the millennium was a celebration of Peter Mandelson's birthday," he says. "New Year's Eve 1999 is just the passing of another year. I'm not going to parties. I don't celebrate holidays, not Yom Kippur, Hanukkah or Christmas, and I don't believe in Santa Claus. If it wasn't for the press we wouldn't have this fuss. The whole thing has assumed a fake sense of importance."

Curmudgeons aside, the most common topic of conversation as we bring in 1998 will be the year 2000: "Where are you going to see in the millennium?"

A quick straw poll of the office indicates that the bulk of us have no idea, although we are beginning to think about it. Those with a commercial interest in the celebration are streets ahead in their planning, however, even if the £800 million Millennium Dome has all the appearance of a rushed job.

Whatever you think of it, the dome is going to be the focus of British attention at midnight on New Year's Eve 1999. "The opening festivities are still being planned," a spokesman says, "but it is likely to be a formal state opening. The only precedent for this was in 1951 when the Festival of Britain was opened by the King and Queen. It is still early to say, but there is likely to be a live broadcast, and a party which uses the dome to its capacity of 35,000 people."

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are almost certain to attend, along with the Prince of Wales and the dome's political architects — Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson and Michael Heseltine.

The Spice Girls, should they still be together, are hoping to sing *Wannabe* on the dome's stage at the stroke of midnight. Oasis, on the other hand, haven't a clue what they will be doing. "Their sights don't go further than their next album," a spokesman says.

As an alternative venue, the promoter Harvey Goldsmith booked London's other dome, the Albert Hall, in 1997 and is planning to charge between four and five thousand people £1,000 each to see the night through. "It will be a music, fashion and style event," he says. Festivities for Goldsmith's event start at 3pm on December 31 and wind up at 8am on January 1.

The most ridiculous gesture in London comes from Uri Geller, who will be standing under Big Ben trying to stop it on the stroke of New Year's Eve. "I'll be linking up with millions of people around the world and will ask everyone to scream 'Stop'."

In anticipation of the capital's influx of celebrators, a West Country businessman, Brian Wilson, claims to be reserving 21,000 prime

London hotel rooms for the final week of 1999. Whether this is true or not, luxury hotels, such as the Savoy and the Ritz, have had so many requests that they are planning to draw names from a hat for their parties.

There will be those, like the Marquess of Bath, who are fortunate enough to have their own castle in which to celebrate. He plans to let his children and their friends have the run of Longleat on New Year's Eve while he imbibes not champagne, but a quantity of ordinary wine. "I have not laid down anything special. Anyway, I have a party for table wine."

Terry Waite plans to celebrate with a day of activities in his village of Harnest in Suffolk. "We'll have a village walk, followed by a grand millennium breakfast in The Crown public house," he says. A forest will be planted on land bought for the occasion, and Mr Waite will attend evening service where a Millennium Book — one entry per family — is completed. "The book will be a snapshot, a

portrait, rather like a millennium Domesday book," he says.

For many, the first snapshot of the millennium will take place in Scotland, where aristocrats and landowners have been inundated with requests for the hire of a castle.

Richard Branson wanted to take over Edinburgh Castle for the evening, with fireworks, live bands, thrills and spills, and Mr Branson, as a suitable climax, ascending into the 21st century in a hot-air balloon. But there was a hitch. Historic Scotland, which manages the castle, turned him down, saying it wasn't for hire.

Mr Branson is proud of his Scottish blood (his granny came from Edinburgh), so he announced, instead, that Virgin is to co-sponsor the city council's Hogmanay celebrations every year into the next millennium.

Offers of up to £10,000 a night have already been made to some owners of castles, and many are receiving several offers a week. Some are hold-

ing back for bigger bids. At Scone Palace, near Perth, the Earl and Countess of Mansfield have turned down three offers, including one from a wealthy Arab, to rent out the Royal Long Gallery for Hogmanay. "The whole estate was rented to a Swiss client in February," the earl explains.

Peter de Savary, who owns Skibo Castle in Dornoch, is also cashing in on castlemania by creating a Viking village in honour of the Norsemen who first settled there. There will be spit-roasts and fine wines, for a minimum of £400 a day.

Wealthy Londoners, such as the financial consultant John Lamb and his family, are already choosing their turtan for the night. They have confirmed their booking for Duns Castle, Berwickshire, at more than £10,000 a night. "I need a castle big enough for all the family," he says. "Duns has 14 bedrooms, which will sleep 28 of our relatives. We want to invite 50 family members, so we'll be renting five or six estate houses as well."

On New Year's Eve 1999, the Lamb family will be holding

their own Highland Games in front of their castle before dinner in the baronial hall.

If the Lamb family has yet to sort out its drink requirements for the evening, this will not be for lack of endeavour on behalf of the champagne houses, which have hyped the market to give the impression that there would be a shortage of bubbly come midnight on New Year's Eve 1999. One mystery buyer, thought to be Bill Wyman, the Rolling Stones' former bassist, is said to have put down £500,000 to ensure his supply of Krug.

But, as *The Times* wine writer Jane MacQuitty has pointed out, stocks of champagne are at an all-time high: "Of all the scandals wine merchants have become embroiled in of late, most pernicious has been the notion that Britain will be drained dry of champagne by the millennium," she says. "Humbly! The Champenois do not care about the millions of bottles of bubbly slumbering in their cellars. Even if you leave millennium celebration champagne purchases until the afternoon of December 31, 1999, you'll still have plenty of non-vintage and even vintage champagnes to choose from."

Nevertheless, the Champenois anticipate that consumption will increase by 30 per cent and that drinkers will move up a level in quality. As a result, 37 champagne companies have already launched special events to help party-goers for the millennium: Roederer with 2,000 individually numbered methuselahs of "Collection 2000"; Perrier Joutet with 2,000 Jeroboams of "Reserve Belle Epoque" at £1,000 apiece; Moët & Chandon with Jeroboams of Dom Perignon 1993; and Pol Roger with 1,000 examples of its Winston Churchill 1988 — also in Jeroboams.

For every Lady Castle or Larry Adler who chooses to eschew the champagne and sit out the celebrations, there will be others who will celebrate twice. British Airways is laying on four Concorde for passengers who want to bring in the new year in a hangar at Heathrow, then fly to New York for a repeat performance.

A trip into the 21st century. Travel, page 17

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**SEEING IN THE FIRST DAWN OF A NEW MILLENNIUM**

Islands in the south Pacific are vying for the first sunrise of the new millennium

A NUMBER of isolated chunks of rock on the far side of the world are taking the star turn in the competition to see the first dawn of the new millennium. These islands in the south Pacific are all claiming to be the place to see the sun first rise.

British interests are represented by Norris McWhirter, the publisher of the *Guinness Book of Records*, who has bought the rights to Hapeta Hill on Pitt Island, one of the Chatham Islands 500 miles east of New Zealand. He claims that he will be able to see further over the horizon than anyone else from his chosen spot. A rival record-breaker has threatened to scupper his chances by floating above the Chatham Islands in a hot-air balloon.

Some of the contending dawn-spotting sites would not make for convivial celebrations: the peak of Mount Galloway on the uninhabited Antipodes Islands does not have a landing strip, and the champagne might freeze in the bottle as it would on Antarctica's Adelle coast, which has also put in a bid.

The most accessible spots are McWhirter's Pitt Island; the tropical Nukunono atoll in Tonga; and Caroline Island, part of the Kiribati chain in the south Pacific. Although the sunrise in Tonga is an hour behind Pitt's, the King of Tonga has been emphasising his trump card: sensational beaches.

The most audacious attempt to capture the millennium-spotting trophy comes from the Kiribati government, which has moved the International Date Line which runs through its archipelago. Its islands all now share the same day, and dawn on January 1, 2000, should break 20 minutes ahead of Pitt Island.





Wear anything you like as long as it's tartan. A woman dancing at Hogmanay — the Highland reel of course

Continued from page 1  
and a guaranteed party, laced with alcohol, at almost every stop. We drove back with exaggerated care, giving every other car a wide berth as we weaved our way home.

All that, of course, has gone. To go any distance in a car these days is considered positively anti-social: the visiting the first-footing, the civil and the whisky, all these become increasingly redundant. Instead we had Hogmanay on television, invented in Scotland but exported worldwide, courtesy of the BBC and an institution called the White Heather Club.

It consisted of stars like Andy Stewart, swathed in lace and tartan, singing *Donald Where's Your Troosers?*, or Kenneth McKellar with *The Song of the Clyde*, Jimmy Shand and his band, Moira Anderson, and dainty girls in white blouses, with laced pumps and pointed toes, dancing a Schottische, or young men with fixed smiles and an air of desperate gaiety, whisking their partners through an Eightsome Reel.

It is hard to explain quite why the Scots became so addicted to this parody of their own culture, but addicted they seemed to be. The writer Tom Nairn, conceding its enormous popularity, described it as "a huge self-contained universe of Kitsch," he thought it was probably endemic. "Tartanry," he said, "will not wither away, if only because it possesses the force of its own vulgarity — immunity from doubt and higher culture. Whatever form of self-rule Scotland acquires, this is a substantial part of the inheritance bequeathed to it. Prayers to the country's essentially socialist or democratic Geist will not make it turn a hair."

He was wrong. Twenty years on, the Scots have tired of the old routine. Whether it is maturity, or boredom, or simply a need to find something new to enjoy, they have reinvented Hogmanay. The prospect of home rule may have sharpened the senses of a



A Japanese tourist enjoys the infectious atmosphere

nation looking to new forms of culture. Its youth demanded change, and change is what it has got.

In Edinburgh, the capital city, there will be, in the last days of December and on into the New Year, a five-day festival which has, in the space of just a few years, grown into the largest of its kind in Europe. Some 200,000 people will pour into the city, to enjoy an extraordinary range of entertainment, from jazz and classical music to street theatre and fireworks.

In place of Tom Nairn's tartanry, there will be Generik Vapeur, a post-modern street theatre group from France; street performers from Melbourne, Milan, Paris and Lyon; instead of Andy Stewart, there is the cult Scottish group, Texas, and, in defiance of the White Heather Club there is salsa dancing in the Club Latino, or a send-up of Scottish dance

hands called the Jimmy Shandrix Experience.

Not that the Scots have abandoned their past traditions — far from it. They have simply adapted them. Top fiddle players have made connections with musicians from Scandinavia to the southern states of America and have woven the music they have discovered into their repertoire, mixing it freely with traditional Scottish melodies.

The bagpipes are as popular as ever, but they have been subverted. Martyn Bennett, a brilliant young piper, whose audiences are equally young, combines his playing with electronic accompaniment, crossing over into jazz, folk or even rave music.

Popular groups like Runrig, Capercaillie, and Deaf Shepherd, attract capacity audiences, using Scottish folk music but playing it in ways they'd never have recognised at the White Heather Club. The ceilidh, a party where

everyone contributes, enjoys a new popularity, with clubs like the Riverside in Glasgow, or the Tron in Edinburgh, packed every Saturday. These days it is called a "thrash ceilidh" — where, as *The Scotsman* columnist Tom Morton puts it, "they play Jimmy Shand at three times the speed and four times as badly."

Peter Irvine, whose agency helped transform the Edinburgh Hogmanay event, says that the models for this new Scotland come from far afield — Sydney's Mardi Gras celebrations or Basel's January parades rather than the ghosts of Hogmanay past. "There's still the same basic need to congregate but the aspirations are far wider."

And if this is indeed the expression of a new Scotland, it is a thoroughly welcome one. It looks outwards to the wider world rather than inwards on its own jaded past. It draws on tradition and adapts it rather than simply recycling it in an increasingly tired version.

As a result it has begun to attract a growing international audience. Last year, Edinburgh strained at the seams as 300,000 people poured into the city centre for the extravagant party in Princes Street Gardens, and the police feared for their safety. This time numbers will be restricted to less than 200,000. You will need a ticket for the major events.

Some things of course will never change. This New Year's Eve again, there will doubtless be drink taken, as they say in Scotland. If your idea of the perfect Hogmanay is clutching a half bottle of vodka and hanging on the neck of a perfect stranger trying to remember the words of *Flower of Scotland*, you will find no lack of enthusiasts to share the experience. But, before you slide into unconsciousness, you may find that this year you've had a better time of it.



Entertainment is free at this time of year: the French street theatre performing jazz in Prince's Street, Edinburgh



The ceilidh, a party where everyone contributes, is enjoying renewed popularity all over Scotland

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# Cool cuts for winter warmers

In town this year, it has been hard to tell the difference between coats and jackets. Overcoats have been knee-length, tailored pieces by designers who favour simplicity — Jil Sander, Calvin Klein, Tomasz Starzewski — and made of uncharacteristically fine fabric. They have been stark, with delicate collars, narrow belts and minimal detailing. Longish jackets, in other words. Away from the land of business suits and micro skirts, however, the greatcoat is still king, and long, sweeping styles that are warm yet practical reign supreme. But unlike last year, this season's offerings are shorter and more elegant. Louise Grunberg of Feminella — which sells

about 50,000 coats a year, from £260 to £400 — says the trend is for glamour: "Coats that you felt you had to buy, because they were too luxurious to leave behind." Best-sellers have been those with a Japanese feel, or 1950s styles with flared skirts in cashmere or angora.

Although fashion editors have been queuing for particular models — Prada's double-face cashmere greatcoat, Marc Jacob's bohemian herringbone design, Tom Ford's fox-fur collar, and Alexander McQueen's pinstriped, shapely dresscoat — there are high-street items just as covetable, for half the price.

For those who favour generous measures and broad shoulders, there is a long

wool coat with fake-fur trim by Pearce II Fionda at Debenhams for £200, a sharply tailored grey version by Marks & Spencer for £150, and military-style coats in jigsaw and Hobbs for less than £200.

Although many women have already bought their winter coats, thousands will be at the sales today, eager for a classic. All the department stores listed in our sales guide (pages 14-15) have coats, many at half price — from a Nicole Farhi swing coat with fake-fur collar for £299 at Fenwick to a brown wool Episode overcoat with fake leopardskin collar for £179, and long black fake-fur coat at H&M for £99.99.

LISA GRAINGER

LEFT: Black leather coat, £1,750. Scappa, Browns, 23-27 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-491 7833). Red line-knit rollneck, £68, John Smedley, Selfridges, W1 (0171-580 5075). Grey wool trousers, from £140 to £175, to order, Burberry, 18-22 Haymarket, SW1, and branches nationwide (0171-734 5929). Black and brown leather court shoes, £39.99, Ravel, 184-188 Oxford Street, W1, and branches (0171-436 3126).



ABOVE: military-style black coat, £230; black suede boots, £125, Hobbs, 84 King's Road, SW3, and branches nationwide (0171-586 5550). Diamond-patterned tights, £8, Aristoc, department stores nationwide (01773 525520). BELOW: charcoal wool-mix coat, £150, Marks & Spencer, selected branches nationwide (0171-935 4422). Sheer knitted vest top, £390, Gucci, 18 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6707). Pinstriped pencil skirt, £190, made to order, Clements Ribeiro (0171-408 7719). Grey metallic shoes, £295, Gina, 189 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 2932). Tights, Aristoc, as before.



ABOVE: brown frock coat, £295. Cream knit rollneck, £169, Mulberry, 41 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 3900).



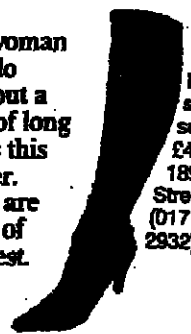
ABOVE: orange and grey checked coat, £338, Indivi by Alsuro Tayama, Browns Focus, 38-39 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-734 0123). Black rollneck, £49.99, Kookai, 123 Kensington High Street, W8, and branches (0171-937 4411).



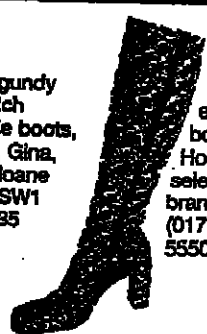
Photographs by Richard Burns. Hair and make-up by Sally Kvalheim for Jo Hansford (0171-495 7774). Styling by Amandip Uppal. Shot on location at Charlton House Hotel, Charlton Road, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 4PR (01749 342008).

## THREE OF A KIND

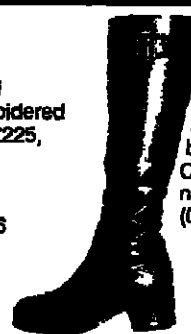
No woman can do without a pair of long boots this winter. Here are three of the best. LG



Burgundy stretch suede boots, £450, Gina, 189 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 2932).



Gold embroidered boot, £225, Hobbs, selected branches (0171-586 5550).



Black leather silver buckle boots, £89, Clarks, branches nationwide (0990 785886).

## LORD Menswear

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# Cleaning up in Wiltshire

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Sitting pretty in his garden on the River Avon: James Dyson, who made a fortune from other people's dirt with his invention of the bagless vacuum cleaner

## ME AND MY GARDEN: JAMES DYSON

James Dyson spent two seasons drunk in charge of a stall at the Chelsea Flower Show. Maybe you were one of those who bought one of his Ballbarrows, causing him to have to take barrow loads of money to his bank in nearby Sloane Square and return for celebratory drinks.

The barrows he invented paved the way for the Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner, which put him 17th on *The Sunday Times* 1997 Rich List at about £100 million.

The invention has also allowed him and his wife, Deirdre, a painter, to buy Lord Putnam's old mill house, with 38 acres of land and up to six acres of water, in a Wiltshire valley seven miles from the Dyson factory.

"I hate commuting and so it was a necessity to live somewhere in this area," says Mr Dyson, who spent six years at the Royal College of Art. His father died when he was nine and his mother died when he was in his early twenties, before he had made his fortune.

Few people, other than friends, bother to explore the small dead-end lane that leads up to the Dysons' stately wrought iron gates. These open on to a large parterre courtyard flanked on two sides by the old mill house and on the third by the River Avon, which turned the old mill.

Box hedges are used to line formal beds that are centred around a tall stone fountain. Off-white roses fill the beds around the fountain, while beds at either end of the courtyard are a mass of lavender. Surprisingly, this large parterre was made and planted only nine months ago, but it appears to have been in place for years (the pop-up irrigation system has helped).

Mr Dyson designed every centimetre of it, painstakingly mapping out precisely how each of the hundreds of different-sized cobbles should be set. "I did it on a drawing board," he says. "At work, everything is done on computers, but I miss the pencil and drawing

board; that is a craft — my old-fashioned way. "I wanted the paths wide enough for two lovers to walk side by side easily without feeling squashed."

Vast stone vases dot the edge of the courtyard and an old millstone has been elevated to form a table in which the cracks have sprouted weeds and nettles.

"We are severe about colour. On the whole, red and pinks are vulgar and tarty. We have only one flower bed, but a lot of area which needs tending, even if it doesn't need weeding."

The flower bed is in one of three secret gardens — enclosures along the river — this one banded by a curving brick wall which encompasses a planting of dahlias, delphiniums, alchemilla, asters, lambs ears and the early signs of oriental poppies.

The Avon snakes through the garden, making a small island of one part of it. Lord Putnam built a series of

humped bridges, one planted with wisteria to look like a Monet painting, and another, called the Mini-Monet, tiny in scale which crosses a rill-like tributary.

A wild bog garden is planted around the rill with gunnara, willows and yellow skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*). Downstream, Mr Dyson fly-fishes for trout, his favourite place being a small cascade of the Avon topped by stepping stones.

It is a well-used garden. Every evening the Dysons walk in it — in winter it can be lit by floodlight — and every other day Mr Dyson takes his three-mile run through part of the garden. Earlier this year, it was the venue for his fiftieth birthday party.

Things have come a long way since the young Dysons, weighed down by debt, did all their own weeding, mowing and planning. Now they do not know where the key to the

garden shed is, and the maintenance is left entirely to one full-time and two part-time gardeners, and the estate manager who is seeding a 16-acre wildflower meadow.

Lord Putnam planted 22,000 trees, Mr Dyson six, but he invested in the ultimate boy's toy: a cat-tread digger which can scoop out trenches and plant trees.

His plans are to build an orangery, a swimming pool and a tennis court and to plant an orchard with apples, green-gages and plums and a mulberry tree in the middle. There will be pleached limes at one end and espaliered pears at the other.

The Dysons built their last garden, near Bath, from scratch. "We did a lot in 18 years — made a rose arbour, rose garden, pleached limes and all the trendy things, but we moved because we wanted a bigger garden," says Mr Dyson, who also has a garden of about 40 acres in Provence. "I think French formal gar-

dens are wonderful with their simple shapes of ovals and circles, and the sheer scale."

He has fond memories of his mother's "wonderfully overgrown" garden in Cley, Norfolk. "She was very interested in plants and how they grow, along with French architecture, so I got dragged around galleries and gardens. In the end it all sank in, and I am behaving exactly as my mother did 30 years ago."

"The money makes the difference," Mr Dyson says. "What is really lovely about life is the struggle and not having loads of money. I have this fear of going bankrupt because I've been so overdrawn for so much of my life, but it never kept me awake. I still have that same worry because, although the company is successful, we are still very ambitious."

"The difference is the amount of cash in my pocket. The struggle is in me and it will go on. It's like the garden: we are always changing it and, if we stop, we move."

JANE OWEN



## STEPHEN ANDERTON'S GARDEN ANSWERS

**Q** About four years ago I was given a self-sown seedling of *Clematis tangutica*. For three years it hardly grew. Then, last spring, away it went, with 60-80 shoots in all directions. I trained it up a southwest-facing wall, where *C. montana* flourishes, but it didn't flower. Can I hope for flowers next year? — J. Hammond, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

**A** This yellow-lantern flowered clematis ought to have been in bloom from June until the frosts. Unwins' selection of *C. tangutica* 'Sunstar' will even flower in 12 weeks from seed. I suspect your plant was not given the deep, rich, planting hole which gives clematis the flying start they need. Now that it has got its roots down, it is prepared to grow, but not flower. Prune it down to 5ft-6ft, give it a lot of rich compost and, if it is not in flower by next July-August, scrap it and start again from a named clone or selected seed.

**Q** Three months ago I planted a maiden-hair tree, *Ginkgo biloba*. It is 20in high and has a side-shoot 13in long. Should I prune it off, and when? Is it worth trying to root it? — H. Price, Duffield, Derbyshire.

**A** Young ginkgos have a nasty habit of lurching out low down and failing to make a decent leader. I would cut back any unusually vigorous side-shoots to a few buds. (This is called "feathering" the tree.)

Next year, when frosts are past and the tree is growing, give it a shot of high-nitrogen feed, once, to force the leading bud into action, and keep any more strong side-shoots nipped back, to force the energy upwards.

Once you have encour-

aged it to form a leader, it should develop the leader unassisted in future years.

This problem is not uncommon in conifers grown from cuttings: if an uncompetitive, weak side-shoot is used to make a cutting, it can fail conspicuously to develop the strong central stem needed by the tree. For these reasons, and because ginkgos are not easy to grow from cuttings, I would throw away the side-shoot.

**Q** My garden is small and the soil poor and stony. It desperately needs compost, but I have no room for a heap, or even a bin. Could I make satisfactory compost in black polythene bags? — J. Bourne, Saffron Walden, Essex.

**A** Composting in strong black bags, such as old compost sacks or even heavy-duty bin liners, is possible, but remember to poke some holes in the sides to let the air in. Plastic keeps the heap moist, which is good, but short of the oxygen needed for decomposition. Nor can you easily turn the contents of a bag to let more air in.

When dealing with small amounts of compost, it is practical and worthwhile to chop up all the waste into small pieces with secateurs. It will rot much faster, and if you add some biological compost accelerant, such as Bional, it will work even faster. If your soil is so hungry, why not buy a small vermin-proof bin (you can get them only 30in high), so that you can put in all your kitchen waste, too? Small compost heaps become too dry to work, but small compost bins are very efficient.

Write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1, Paddington Street, London E1 9JN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. Enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.

GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY



*Clematis tangutica* needs plenty of rich compost

## WEEKEND COURSES: Walk in the Wye Valley, become a blacksmith in West Sussex, fish in Scotland or ride on Dartmoor

### NEW YEAR BREAKS

Trail riding weekend, for experienced riders only, in the Brecon Beacons on January 2-4 with farmhouse accommodation: £150. Pottery weekend in Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, £144. Just two of the courses with Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 834053).

West African Festival at the Museum of Mankind, Burlington Gardens, W1 (0171-323 3511) from today until Dec 30. Music, dance, pottery, African food and stories. Admission free.

Ski weekends in Scotland during January. From the Mercury Hotels in Aviemore or Fort William from £75 per head, half-board. Full details on Freephone 0800 700400. Guided walks from the Rothay Garden Hotel, Grasmere, Cumbria (015394 33334). Prices, all inclusive, from £225.

Antiques for beginners: the Alexander technique. Two one-day courses on January 3 at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset (01460 55806). £23 per course.

New year retreat at Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, near Bath (01761 433709).

Multi-activity breaks in Cambridgeshire. Archery, clay pigeon shooting, go-karting, at the Haycres, Wansford, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (01780 782225). From £110 for two nights.

Organic gardening, herb gardens: food as medicine: art and medieval history: walking in the Wye Valley. A selection of the courses at Courtfield Manor, Guadrich, Herefordshire (01594 861435). Prices from £85-£100.

Egyptology. A two-day course at Burton Manor College, South Wirral (0151-336 5172). Price £98 inclusive.

The Paston letters writers' Venice: the art and architecture of the Islamic world. All at the University of Cambridge (01954 210636) from January 2-4. Price £120 per course, inclusive.

## Learn to be lord of the dance



Learn to belly dance at Burton Manor College, Cheshire

West Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £97. Calling all pianistic hoves and gifts in fabric. At Knuston Hall Residential College, Irchester, Northamptonshire (01935 312104). Price £89.

### JANUARY 9-11

A day at the Wells. A visit to Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Plus antique shops and stately homes from the Hotel du Vin & Bistro, Tunbridge Wells (01892 526458). Weekend rates from £69 per night. Belly dancing. Learn the basics on a weekend course at Burton Manor College, South Wirral, Cheshire (0151-336 5172). All inclusive. £98. Barber shop singing: winter landscape painting: France and

England, a love-hate relationship. Courses available this weekend at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Prices from £189. Writing romantic fiction: Chinese brushwork: this weekend at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset (01460 52427). From £110. Time travelling in the West Country: confidence building for women: this weekend at Higham Hall, Bassenthwaite Lake, Cuckermouth, Cumbria (017687 762776). Price from £112. Exploring Spain: computing skills: reflexology. All this weekend at Hill Residential Centre, Abertavenny, South Wales (01495 533777). From £88, inclusive. Get fit for the new year: calming techniques and alternative thera-

pies. All this weekend at Lancashire College, Chorley, Lancashire (01257 260909). £95 per course. An Italian weekend: the ritual year: ancient Egyptian painting. Four courses this weekend at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price £121.

The early 19th-century great house. At the University of Oxford Department of Continuing Education, Rewley House, Oxford (01865 270360). Price £64. The Holy Land and the Old Testament literature on Venice: America in the 1960s. At Wansfell College, Theydon Bois, Essex (01882 813027). Price £85.

### JANUARY 16-18

Salmon fishing on the River Tay. From the Ballathie Hotel, Kindlaven, Perthshire (01250 883268). Gillie and boat provided. Half-board from £80.

Winter survival weekend in the Brecon Beacons. Two nights, equipment and instruction provided: £110. With Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830063).

Flying weekend break. Win your wings in a Tomahawk aircraft on a weekend at the Angel Hotel, Midhurst, West Sussex (01730 812421). Flights also available in a hot-air balloon or a microlight. Prices from £135 per night, including one-hour flight.

Weekend walking or riding on Dartmoor. From Lewtrenchard Manor Hotel, Lewdown, near Okehampton, Devon (01506 783256). Prices from £105-£145.

Northamptonshire — birthplace of the USA: recorder players weekend: lace. Three varied weekend courses at Knuston Hall, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). Price per course £89, inclusive.

Computers without consternation: texture in landscape: how to be a freelance writer. All this weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 805306). Price, residential, from £114.

ROBIN NEILLANDS



Enjoy the West African Festival at the Museum of Mankind in London from today



# The best thing I've seen all year



Even established gardeners make new discoveries. Celebrities tell  
Stephen Anderton of some surprising finds they made in 1997

Ask anyone for their memories of their favourite plants and people, and you'll find they are always interlocked with a certain place and time. As the year comes to a close, I asked some luminaries of the gardening world with which plant they had had a memorable encounter in 1997. I wanted to know which plants gave them great pleasure, and which offered great value for space this year.

Rosemary Verey is known across the world for her garden at Barnsley House in Gloucestershire, and for her collaboration with the Prince of Wales on the garden at Highgrove. Without hesitation, she told me that her plant of 1997 was a smart new nasturtium, 'Red Wonder'. It pleased me to see someone putting in a good word for a variety of this old cottage-garden favourite, *Tropaeolum majus*.

Mrs Verey said: "I bought four plants of this annual nasturtium at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1996. They are a real wonder — everyone wanted one — so we propagated them from soft cuttings on the mist bench where they rooted within days. The leaves are a rich green with an overtone of crimson matching the luscious, deep red flowers."

"The plant makes a compact mound about 35cm square, with masses of flowers, some hiding in the foliage, some standing well above it. It succumbs to the slightest frost, and I am not sure if seedlings will come true, but at least our cuttings are safe."

Some good lessons there. Even "annual" nasturtiums, such as the double 'Hermine', can be kept going from year to year by means of cuttings under cool glass. And an ill-bred nasturtium is one which hides its flowers in the foliage until they almost disappear. They should be avoided.

Gardening guru Alan Titchmarsh remembers 1997 by a rhododendron new to him, the tender *Rhododendron velutarium* 'Cubiti', bought from that excellent nursery for fruit and conservatory plants, Reads, of Hales Hall, Loddon, in Norfolk.

"It's a tender species from Burma, most commonly grown as a pot plant for a cool conservatory. In Britain it produces long, white, scented trumpets in late winter and early spring," he said. In the wild it tends to be epiphytic, planting itself in the forks or stumps of other trees, and it has a



"slightly gawky habit", made up for, in Mr Titchmarsh's eyes, by the perfume and the attractive peeling bark. With a little care it can be persuaded into a more satisfying shape.

Beth Chatto is known for her understanding of plants, and especially herbaceous perennials. In summer, Dutch tourists come to her Colchester nursery in droves, intent on serious buying and revering it as a kind of horticultural Harrods. For her, 1997 was a shining year for *Sedum* 'Matrona', which simply ignored the drought in her gravel garden and grew well.

"I brought 'Matrona' home from Ewald Hugin of Freiburg," she said. "He selected it in his nursery as an outstanding seedling and from spring to winter it catches the eye. Stout stems clothed in large, fleshy, purple-tinted leaves carry wide heads of dusky rose-pink, starry flowers in late summer. It's still good in winter, when the seedheads turn coffee brown. I grow it with *Allium hollandicum* because it is good for covering the bare space when the alliums have faded. It has a lovely texture contrast with woolly grey foliage too."

The gardening broadcaster and writer Nigel Colborn put a rose at the top of his list for 1997, the low-mounding 'Flower Carpet White'. "It is such a good rose — masses of flowers all season long, and they are gently scented," he said. "I grew two in big tubs, fed and watered them regularly, and they did marvellously. The foliage stayed perfectly green and glossy, with no signs of disease. I even strapped

mildewed and rusty leaves to its sister variety, 'Flower Carpet Pink', but it resisted all infection."

You cannot get a better recommendation than that. It is a cracking rose. Pity about the miserable name.

Plantsman Roy Lancaster is known for his plant-hunting expeditions across the world. Fresh back from the rainforests and moors of Patagonia, he was keen to recommend a lush evergreen ground-cover, *Reineckia carnea*. (Remember "wry-neckia" if the name won't stick.) "It grows in sun or shade and in any soil, and has pale pink, starry flower spikes from late summer into autumn. It is easy to grow and propagate and it looks good all year round," he said. (There speaks the plantsman.)

Geoffrey Smith, of *Gardeners' Question Time*, is one of the kindest men I know. Without hesitation, his candidate for plant of 1997 (and perhaps every year) was a good old silver birch, *Betula pendula*. He planted one as a seedling 25 years ago, and it is now his granddaddy pride and joy.

"There is nothing more elegantly beautiful in winter than the proper silver birch with its white stems and weeping branches," he said. "In spring it's plum-purple in bud, then a haze of pale green as the buds open, and a rich green in summer, but never heavy. And then in autumn it's a gorgeous yellow. It's a plant that simply can't be beaten."

But can I follow it? Well, I will choose *Heliosis* 'Sommersonne' (Summer Sun) for 1997. What generosity this easy perennial has. By June in my garden it was opening its first chrome-yellow 3in daisies on unsupported 30-40in stems, and it never stopped until November. Even now, in December, its skeleton stems still stand bolt upright.

In July through to October it made a glowing partnership with bright orange *Tithonia rotundifolia* 'Torch', planted out in mid-June. But the real miracle was that, in my rarely rained-upon garden in north Essex, the first flowers to open in June started to look shabby only in October. There was no need for any dead-heading at all until the last few weeks of the season. All I had to do was enjoy the show. Like Wordsworth, but more cheerful.

■ Make 12in hardwood cuttings of roses, setting them two-thirds under the soil in a trench in a shady place. By February, the bottom of the cuttings should have callused and white roots should be starting to appear. The cuttings can then be moved or transplanted to their final positions next autumn. To save space, the cuttings may spend the winter in the trench in tight bundles of one variety. Open up the bundles in spring and line out for growing on.



only those cuttings which have rooted successfully. ■ On dry, sunny or breezy days, ventilate greenhouses as much as outdoor temperatures will allow, to reduce the onset of fungal diseases. In cold or

cool greenhouses, water sparingly in the morning. Keep water off leaves and stems. ■ Prune gooseberries and black, red and white currants, according to their different requirements.

■ Check over shears, lawn mowers and power equipment, and get any servicing or sharpening done before the spring rush. Start up petrol engines periodically through the winter, and run them for a few minutes. ■ Place seed orders, checking first what seed you have left from last year; most seeds will still germinate well enough after 12 months. Resolve not to buy seed of vegetables, which crop just as you go away on summer holiday.

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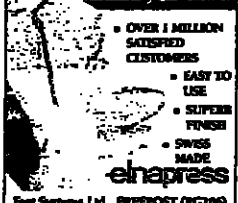
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ANGUS MENZIE

## Lois Letts on the problems of moving house at this time of year

**W**ho moves home over the Christmas period? Would anyone go out of their way to combine two of the most stressful events known to man (and woman)?

The answer is yes, a surprisingly large number of people. Linda Schofield, marketing manager for Pickfords, calls December one of the peak moving times for families. "Children finish the school term, and parents want them settled into their new home, with stockings hung on the fireplace, by the time Father Christmas comes calling. We're working flat out until Christmas Eve, and we're back into action after Boxing Day."

Young professionals, reluctant to take days off in January, use the office break to move. Employees in industry, too, have a compulsory ten-day break. Others fall into the "reluctant mover" category, those at the top of chains who are being pressurised to leave. No one wants to be homeless for Christmas, or to face the prospect of six months in rented accommodation, the modern equivalent of a night in the stable.

The challenges of a move over the Christmas period should be borne in mind well in advance. Daylight will be fading by 4pm, so sunbathing across the hill with antique furniture can be hazardous. Colds and the office party season will slow down office workers, so conveyancing and reconnection of electricity might take longer than normal.

Transport in the country should be appropriate to the terrain. Every year, farmers do a roaring trade hiring out tractors and Land

## A moving time at Christmas

### SMOOTH OPERATING



**BOOK** a removal company the moment you know you are moving because they get busy at this time of year. Have emergency numbers of plumbers and electricians at the ready. Something is bound to freeze.



**ORGANISE** electricity, water, gas and telephones as soon as possible, and lighting at the other end. Daylight will have faded by 4pm. Ask the people who are moving out to leave the central heating on.



**ENSURE** that the access road is free of obstacles. They will be difficult to spot in the dark. Keep children out of the way by sending them to grandparents. If you must have them, keep them busy.

Rovers to lift removal vans out of muddy ditches.

When you reach your new home, go easy on yourself. According to a survey by Pickfords on the emotional side of moving house, three-quarters of women, and nearly half of men, believe their house has a "personality", and are upset about leaving it. At this nostalgic time of year, house movers will be more tearful than ever.

Josie Ray overcame considerable challenges to have a successful Christmas in 1999. She was leaving a cottage in Herefordshire for a farmhouse in the same county, nestled in the shadow of the Black Mountains. "My husband had been ill with a collapsed lung and flu. He was unfit to work and we thought we might as well move while he was recovering. The vendors accepted a low offer

because they wanted the money by Christmas."

But her husband's ill-health was not all she had to contend with. "The conveyancing was quite complicated because chunks of farmland had been sold off. Our solicitor was in bed with a temperature, so to get things completed in time I went around to his office and did a lot of the paperwork myself with his secretary."

Then there was the unpredictable British weather. "The weather had been good, but on the morning of the move, December 19, we woke up to find it was snowing heavily. Our next-door neighbour was being buried on the same day. We had to load in front of the mourners, and then the removal van got stuck behind the hearse."

Arriving at the other end, several hours behind schedule, they found there was no central heating. "But we got the fires going with logs which we'd brought with us. That evening we put our coats on and headed to the pub."

The secret is in not expecting too much of yourself as a hostess. Visiting relations on Christmas Day is often the answer for exhausted mothers. Dora Birchett intends to visit a sister this year, after taking the best part of a year to sell a farmhouse in Wales.

"Our first buyer withdrew at the last moment after spending £7,000 on surveys," she says. "I had packed our furniture and left it stored in a container on a field. It is still there — nine months and two buyers later. Plastic garden chairs are all we have to sit on."

### SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS



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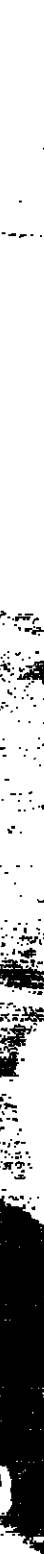
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Tiger cubs make great playmates for a girl whose

father takes his work home with him, Victoria O'Brien discovers



Three-year-old Samantha with Genghis. "He keeps stealing my toys," says Samantha, whose father is head cat-keeper at a wildlife park. A fully-grown Genghis will weigh between 40 and 50 stone

## Oh please Dad, can we have a cat?

Most toddlers love cuddly tiger cubs. Samantha Clark is no exception. The difference is that her furry friends are real. Her father, Giles Clark, is head cat-keeper at Paradise Wildlife Park in Brixton, Hertfordshire, and that means there is usually one or more tiger cubs roaming around the house. "They always steal my toys," moans Samantha, three, who otherwise seems unfazed at sharing her home with playmates which in just a few months will weigh about 20 stone.

"They gain a stone a month during the early stages of their development, and eventually will weigh between 40 and 50 stone," says Mr Clark, who is currently babysitting a pair of three-month-old brothers. "We brought these two from a private collection in Ireland a few weeks ago."

"At this stage they are still friendly and open to human contact. The point about rearing tiger cubs at home is that I will still be able to walk into their enclosure at the zoo and touch and handle them, even when they are fully grown."

Genghis and Tamair (Mr Clark always names the tigers in relation to their native country) have already been weaned by their mother. Often, however, Mr Clark will take charge of tiger cubs at a much earlier stage and bottle feed them at home. "When Samantha was a baby, I was getting up in the night to feed her one hour, and having to do the same thing with the cubs the next."

Luckily for Mr Clark, with the baby tigers he can avoid the nappy changing which most new fathers have to endure. "In

the wild, mother tigers encourage their young by gently nuzzling their rear end. I don't quite go that far, but if you press a warm, wet flannel there, it usually has the same effect."

At 19, Mr Clark is probably the youngest head cat-keeper in the country, and his affinity with these playful but still wild beasts is astounding. He sleeps with Genghis and Tamair in the front room of his parents' house, and even though they are past the stage of bottle feeding, he still fetches milk for them when they wake up hungry at four in the morning. The mixture is a base of the same type of milk used for rearing puppies, with added vitamins, calcium and cod-liver oil.

**"They are not circus animals, and I'm not here to teach them tricks. They never bite so hard that they draw blood"**

Soft baby brushes are used on their fur, until they are old enough to groom themselves. Discipline is instilled at an early age, and when Genghis of Tamair bare their claws, Mr Clark is quick to discipline them with a sharp word and a tap on the nose. He says: "They are not circus animals, and I'm not here to teach them to perform tricks. But for safety reasons they can be trained not to harm people. They are still wild animals and it's important that they

are allowed to play rough and tumble, and even bite me, but they are disciplined enough never to bite so hard that they draw blood."

"Nibbling and biting are part of the tigers' playful social behaviour, but Mr Clark is still careful to leave the cubs in peace when they are eating. When there is food around even these doe-eyed youngsters are likely to become aggressive if you disturb them. As well as the milk compound, he feeds the cubs a mixture of meat — chicken, rabbit or

horse — and blood. "Their basic instincts are still there, and being hand-reared won't change that," he says.

Without a properly-balanced diet, tiger cubs can suffer all sorts of health problems. At the early stages, calcium and phosphates are most important because their bones, teeth and claws are developing so quickly.

is needed at which stage of their development," Mr Clark says. "I've hand-reared nine tigers at home, as well as ones I've looked after at the park, and it's simply a matter of learning from experience."

Hand-rearing enables him to have intimate contact with the animals once they are fully grown, and on occasion this close



The cubs are fed a protein-rich diet of meat — chicken, rabbit or horse

relationship can save their life. A year ago, Bruno, a three-year-old Bengal tiger who weighed 26 stone, became severely ill with pneumonia. He was on oxygen, had to be injected every two hours, and had to be prevented from sleeping on his side, where there was a danger he would drown in the fluid from his own lungs. "I slept in the

compound with Bruno at the wildlife park for nine nights," Mr Clark says. "There was no other way to look after him."

Last Christmas there was a similar emergency situation when Turkana, a four-month-old lion cub, went into shock after a series of hernia operations. "Normally I would have stayed at the park with him," says Mr Clark, "but it was mid-winter and I didn't fancy having to spend Christmas Day outside, so I brought him home instead."

The cubs will live at home with Mr Clark until they are about four months old, but the quality of their lives in captivity will be greatly improved by this initial human contact. Mr Clark can take his tigers on long walks around the wildlife park, introduce them to other animals, and even let them swim freely in the large open pond during the summer.

"Not everyone believes in hand rearing," he admits, "but these animals have been born outside their natural state anyway. Building a close, personal relationship with them from the start simply means you can extend their territory in captivity, and allow them to gain greater stimulation from their surroundings."

Mr Clark proudly reels off the names of the tiger and lion cubs he has reared. He was particularly fond of Nikka, a Bengal tiger, whom his mother woke up with at the end of her bed one morning. "Nikka was very tame, and became like one of the family," says Mrs Clark. "Giles used to sleep with her in his room, so she basically had the run of the house."

Not all the cubs are as well-behaved as Nikka, however, and several tiger cubs later, Mr Clark's parents have had to get rid of the settee from the living room. "They tore straight through the upholstery," Mr Clark says. The family has two armchairs left, but they still end up sitting on the floor — the baby tigers like to curl up in the chairs for their midday naps.

## Home where no one has to be alone

In the long corridors of St Mungo's hostel for the homeless, it is easy to track down Adam Henry's room. Just follow the lusty barking of his constant companion, a Staffordshire bull-terrier cross called Grudd.

Adam and Grudd are lucky beneficiaries of a new approach to caring for homeless people with pets.

Until recently people living rough with animals stood little or no chance of a warm bed for the night — a tough deal considering that about a quarter of them have a pet.

St Mungo's hostel, off Clapham Common, south London, was converted from three merchants' mansions. About 120 homeless people live there. Only two of whom have dogs: Adam and a man with a border collie called Oslo.

But over Christmas scores of pets belonging to the homeless were receiving attention. For Grudd and Oslo there was dog food and turkey, and — more importantly — the guarantee that they would not be separated.

Thanks to St Mungo's, which pioneered the idea of letting the homeless in with their animals, more charities are opening their doors to companion animals.

It is a breakthrough that has brought Adam from despair to a real hope that after 12 years of living rough he will find a permanent home and a place on a motorcycle engineering course.

Crisis is also allowing pets into its hostels, and is operating an outreach service into the new year. A converted articulated lorry will tour the streets carrying pet food and a vet to give emergency treatment. The National Canine Defence League is running free veterinary clinics for the pets of the homeless.

Richard Smith, of the league's Hope Project, says: "Attitudes are changing. About 12 hostels in London are welcoming dogs this winter, some of them for the first time. Of course, you have to limit the number of rooms for pets. If every room offered the facility there would be chaos."

At St Mungo's the rooms are the same for everybody "except that those with dogs don't have a carpet," says Adam, 29, who dropped out of cosy middle-class life in Buckinghamshire 12 years ago and went to live on a travellers' site in Wales.

"It was the punk thing to do," he says. "We had some great times —



Adam Henry with his bull-terrier cross Grudd at St Mungo's

and some rough ones. I drifted into squatting in London and got Grudd cheap because he was the runt of the litter. He's a bull terrier crossed with a dachshund — a stretched terrier with short legs. A good thing, short legs. Don't need as much exercise. It's handy to have a dog when you're squatting, and not just for the company."

Adam was relieved to be offered a place at St Mungo's nine months ago because "squatting had become a hassle. Coming here was like winning on the lottery".

Housing benefit pays his £146 a week rent (with no charge for the dog). About £6 a week comes out of his fortnightly £88 social security cheque to pay for gas, water, electricity and breakfast. Cooked meals are £1.20.

St Mungo's is the patron saint of Glasgow and of Celtic travellers. The charity that took his name is a housing association which also runs

50 hostels, care homes and supported houses, giving shelter to more than 1,000 people every night.

Its outreach team searches the streets at night persuading people to come in from the cold.

Its resettlement team tries to place them in accommodation, and a job club offers the chance to move back into the community and lead an independent life.

The RSPCA welcomes the trend towards allowing pets in. Although its rules prevent it providing pets for people without homes, it points out that the homeless can give their animals a better deal, as the pet always has a companion.

"Even so," an RSPCA spokesman says, "we worry that the homeless may not always be able to feed their pets properly — although many people feed their animals and go without themselves."

**JACK CROSSLEY**

St Mungo's (0181-600 3000); National Canine Defence League (0171-837 0006); Crisis (0171-377 0489).

### A VET WRITES

**Q** I bought two pairs of doves three weeks ago. I was told to keep them in the aviary for six weeks before letting them fly free, otherwise they might return to their original home.

They haven't tried to escape but they are not behaving as two pairs. Two stay together at one side of the aviary, another cowers behind them — and she's had her neck pecked. The fourth bird is on his own on the opposite side of the aviary. Is there anything I can do? Would it help if I put the nest boxes in now to encourage them to pair off properly?

**A** I wonder if you have two pairs of doves. Or one pair and two of the same sex. They're not easy to sex. The cocks have a larger head, brighter beaks and legs and show positive courting behaviour towards their mate, which the two who are staying together appear to be doing. Some "hideaway" spots in the aviary will help and perhaps protect the pecked one. It could help to put out nest boxes in January. And if the two "loners" are one of each sex, a nesting site might give them the right idea.

**Q** A neighbour's cat has taken to spending time with us. She's very welcome but she has a severe skin problem. There are sores inside her thighs and on her back which she chews and scratches, leaving them raw. She wears a flea collar and I haven't found any fleas. She's not our cat so we can hardly take her to a vet and we don't want to confront the owners. Is there anything we can do? There are squirrels and foxes about. Could she have caught something from them?

**A** Forget squirrels and foxes. Your description of the cat's troubles suggests an allergy called milium eczema or milium dermatitis, almost always related to flea bites. A hypersensitive cat may develop this skin reaction when she's carrying only one or two fleas. Flea collars don't last for ever. Some remain effective for four or five months, but others need renewing sooner. The collar may be out of date and it's difficult to find a solitary flea. The cat needs to see a vet and you should try to help. A tactical approach might be offering the loan of a cat basket (borrow or buy one if necessary) to facilitate the trip to the surgery. I'm sure the cat can return to an itch-free life with some simple treatment.

**Q** I'm about to make a new year resolution to worm my Yorkshire terrier regularly. What's the best wormer and how often is it necessary?

**A** An adult dog should be wormed every three or four months and puppies more frequently. You're aiming at *Toxocara canis* — the round worm — which doesn't upset fully grown dogs but can, rarely, cause trouble in people.

The worm eggs, from infected dogs, develop on grass under warm, moist conditions. Children may pick up worm larvae while playing in a park and, if the immature worm survives in a human — and the vast majority don't — it can damage the eye, leading to some loss of sight.

When a dog picks up worm larvae most of them survive, but many remain inactive for years as immature cysts in the muscles. Wormers based on piperazine are effective only against adult worms in the dog's intestine.

More sophisticated preparations contain fenbendazole and deal with immature cysts as well. This would be my choice. Your vet can supply the right dose, then all you have to do is remember your resolution.

**JAMES ALLCOCK**

Write to The Times Vet, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

### ADOPT ME



Ash: playful and friendly

ASH is a five-year-old female Labrador-cross who was brought into Wood Green Animal Shelter as a stray. She is playful and friendly, but a little too boisterous for some dogs and cats. Ash would suit a home with children, preferably as the only animal.

For more information, please contact Wood Green Animal Shelter on 01480 830014.



One man and his dog, off the streets and in a home







## THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE BEST SALES



Continued from page 14

□ **Georges Rech**  
181-182 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 3343). Also Fenwick, Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Selfridges. From Dec 29. Up to 30 per cent off most items.

□ **Gianni Versace**  
34-35 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 1862); Italian Centre, Glasgow (0141-552 6510). From Jan 5. Up to 30 per cent off.

□ **Giorgio Armani**  
37 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6232). From today. Reductions of 30 to 50 per cent.

□ **Hennes**  
261-271 Regent Street, W1 (0171-495 4003). Other branches: Brent Cross, Marble Arch, Kingston upon Thames, Harrow, Croydon, Watford, Wimbledon and branches nationwide. Inquiries: 0171-255 2031. Sale now on. All stock reduced by 50 per cent. Black lace cardigan from £29.99 to £14.99; black velvet shirt from £19.99 to £9.99; long black fake fur coat was £99.99, sale price £49.99.

□ **Hermès**  
179 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-823 1014); 155 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 8856). Jan 3-10. Selected ready-to-wear items reduced 40-60 per cent.

□ **Joseph**  
26 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 5470); 23 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 3713); 28 Brook Street, W1 (0171-629 6077); 124 Draycott Avenue, SW3 (0171-225 0364); 77 Fulham Road, SW3 (general inquiries 0171-623 9500). From today. Discounts of up to 30 per cent on selected items including coats, trousers and leather-wear.

□ **Jaeger**  
200-206 Regent Street, W1 (0171-200 4000). 100 stores nationwide, general inquiries (0171-200 4211). Sale now on. Discounts from 20-50 per cent, eg. 52 per cent off black beaded evening dress; 53 per cent off cashmere pullover; 50 per cent off damson velvet jacket.

□ **Karen Millen**  
Branches nationwide (01622 664032). From today. From 30 to 50 per cent discount.

□ **Ken Lane**  
30 Burlington Arcade, W1 (0171-499 1364) and 58 Beauchamp Place, SW3 (0171-594 1985). From Dec 29. Up to 50 per cent off a wide selection of costume jewellery and a further 25 per cent off existing sale items.

□ **Kingshill Mail Order**  
For copies of the Kingshill British Designer Collections and the Diffusion catalogues, call 01494 890555. Sale now on. From 25 per cent off all designer styles in both catalogues.

□ **Koh Samui**  
65 Monmouth Street, WC2 (0171-240 4280). Sale starts today. Up to 60 per cent off designer clothes.

□ **Kookai**  
123 Kensington High Street, W8; 25 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-937 4411. Starts today. Up to 50 per cent off.

□ **Lilleywhites**  
24-36 Regent Street, SW1 (0171-495 4000). Eight branches nationwide. From today. Discounts on many lines: from 25-50 per cent off.

□ **Morris & Spencer**  
Marble Arch, Oxford Street, W1 (0171-435 7954).

286 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-935 4422. From today. End of season clearance.

□ **MaxMara**  
32 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 7941); 153 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 4748). From today. Up to 20 per cent off selected items.

□ **Miss Selfridge**  
Branches nationwide: 0181-910 1359 or 0171-938 4182. Sale now on.

Short-sleeved dresses were £25, now £10; long coats with fur collar were £125, now £65; chenille V-necks were £20, now £10.

□ **Monsoon**  
Branches nationwide (0171-313 3000). From today. Up to 50 per cent off the collection. Aster cardigan was £85, now £60; Geisha silk jacket was £199, sale price £135; short strappy Soraya dress was £180, now £80; velvet evening coat was £175, sale price £125. Accessorize shops are reducing selected items by 50 per cent.

□ **Mulberry**  
41-42 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 4323); 185 Brompton Road, SW1 (0171-225 0313); 23-25 Swinagate, York (01904 611055). From today. Up to 50 per cent off selected items, eg. silk taffeta blouse was £215, now £139; full-length velvet opera coat was £695, sale price £459. Accessories: Kelby bag was £345, now £229. Home collection: paisley tartan throw was £159, now £79.50; selected wallpapers were £25 per roll, now £7.

□ **Next**  
Three hundred branches nationwide. Inquiries 0116-284 9424. From today. Up to 50 per cent off most items. Women's wear: Camel stretch jacket was £99, now £44.99; stretch bootleg trousers were £44.99, sale price £19.99. Men's wear: navy wool pinstripe jacket was £105, now £49.99. Reductions on children's wear and interiors.

□ **Nicole Farhi**  
153 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 8368); 193 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 0877); 12 Floral Street, WC2 (0171-497 8713); 25-26 St Christopher's Place, W1 (0171-436 3461); 27 Hampstead High Street, NW3 (0171-435 0866). Sale now on until mid-Jan. Up to 30 per cent reductions on selected items.

□ **Nougat**  
Nougat at Fenwick's, Brent Cross Shopping Centre (0181-202 8200); Jill Black, Barton Arcade, Manchester (0161-834 5160). Sale starts today. 30 per cent off most items.

□ **Oasis**  
292 Regent Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-452 1000). Sale now on. Up to 50 per cent off selected items, bigger markdowns from Dec 29. Tiger-print skirts were £39.99, now £24.99; marble-print jackets were £89.99, now £49.99; cross-over sequinned dress was £59.99, now £39.99; up to 50 per cent off selected jewellery.

□ **Osh Kosh B'Gosh**  
17 King's Road, SW3 (0171-730 1341). Sale now on. Up to 50 per cent off selected merchandise.

□ **Patrick Cox**  
8 Symons Street, SW3 (0171-730 6504); Patrick Cox Wannabe, 129 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-730 8886). From today. Up to 40 per cent off men's shoes and 30 per cent off ladies'; up to 50 per cent off selected items.

□ **Paul Smith**  
40-44 Floral Street, WC2 (0171-636 7828); 10 Byard Lane, Nottingham (0115 950 6123); 66-68 Bridge Street, Manchester (0161-631 9111). Inquiries 0161-379 7133. Paul Smith Jeans, 9-11 Langley Court, WC2. From Jan 2 at London and Nottingham branches. Discounts up to 30 per cent with special reductions on selected items.

□ **Penhaligon's**  
20a Brook Street, W1 (0171-493 0002); 16 Burlington Arcade, W1 (0171-629 1416); 41 Wellington Street, WC2; (0171-636 2150). Sale starts today until mid-Jan. 8 Royal Exchange, EC3 (0171-283 0711). Sale starts Dec 30. Lords cologne spray from £27 to £15; Violetta Bath Essence was £21, now £15; Venetian Cameo Aqua and Pearl earrings from £350 to £120; gilded enamel Egg Bottle was £125, sale price £50.

□ **Prada**  
43-45 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 0008). From today. Up to 30 per cent off autumn/winter collection.

□ **Ravel**  
184-188 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-436 3126) and branches nationwide (0171-631-0224). Sale now on. Up to 30 per cent off.

□ **Red or Dead**  
38 Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-437 1649); 33 Neal Street, WC2. From today. Up to 40 per cent off all stock. Knee-high boots from £99 to £69; leather shoes from £75 to £49; trousers were £79, sale price £55.

□ **Reiss**  
The Reiss Building, 114 King's Road, SW3; 116 Long Acre, WC2; 245 Regent Street, W1; and branches in Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow (0171-225 4900). Sale starts today. Discounts of 10 to 50 per cent on men's wear.

□ **Tie Rack**  
487 Oxford Street, W1; 49 Regent Street, W1, and

branches nationwide (0181-230 2333). From today. Up to 50 per cent off selected items.

□ **River Island**  
Branches nationwide (0181-998 8822). Sale now on. Black bootleg trousers were £24.99, now £12.99; chocolate pinstripe jacket was £49.99, sale price £29.99.

□ **Russell & Bromley**  
24-25 New Bond Street, London W1; 41 branches nationwide. Inquiries (0171-629 6903). Sale now on. Discounts from 30-50 per cent.

□ **The Scotch House**  
2 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, SW1; 84-86 Regent Street, W1; 39-41 Princes Street, Edinburgh (0171-581 2151). From today. Up to 40 per cent off a wide selection of items.

□ **Simpson Piccadilly**  
203 Piccadilly, W1. Customer inquiries (0171-734 2002). From today until Jan 31. All customers can enter a free draw during the sales period to win £500. Up to 50 per cent off many items including collections by MaxMara, Synonyme and Paul Costelloe: 20 per cent off coats from Mansfield, Schneider, Fennella. DAKS quilted jackets for women were £329, now £164.50. Men's wear: DAKS suits from £299 to £149; Simpson overcoats were £350, now £275.

□ **Snow and Rock**  
188 Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 0872); 8 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (0171-831 6900); St Albans Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts (01442 23305); 14 Priory Queensway, Birmingham (0121-236 8280); Vale Road, Parkwood Springs, Sheffield (0114-275 1700). Inquiries (01332 589589). Branches in Sheffield, Hemel, M25 superstore. Sale now on until Jan 11. Birmingham and London stores from today. Selected offers on boots, skis and snowboards and up to 30 per cent off certain items of clothing.

□ **Tie Rack**  
487 Oxford Street, W1; 49 Regent Street, W1, and

branches nationwide (0181-230 2333). From today. Up to 50 per cent off selected items.

□ **Timberland**  
72 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-495 2139). Inquiries (0345 669888). From today. From 30-40 per cent discount on many items.

□ **Valentino**  
174 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 5855); Miss Valentino, 160 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-493 2698). Sale now on. Up to 60 per cent off selected items.

□ **Vivienne Westwood**  
6 Davies Street, W1 (0171-629 3757); 43 Conduit Street, W1 (0171-439 1109); World's End, 430 King's Road, SW10 (0171-352 6551). Sale starts Jan 3. Up to 20 per cent off selected items.

□ **Wallis**  
217 Oxford Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0181-910 1333). Discounts of up to 50 per cent.

□ **Warehouse**  
19-21 Argyl Street, W1 (0171-437 7101); 75 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-278 3491. From today. Discounts of between £5 and £20 on selected items.

□ **Watches of Switzerland**  
16 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-493 5916); branches nationwide (0171-931 7171). From today until Jan 24. Up to 50 per cent off a wide range of well-known names.

□ **Whistles**  
12-14 St Christopher's Place, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-487 4484). Sale now on. From 20 to 50 per cent off selected items.

□ **Yves Saint Laurent rive gauche Femme**  
33 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6706); 137 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-493 1800). From today. Up to 50 per cent off autumn/winter stock. Women's

wear: Wool knitted bootleg trousers were £395, now £235; tiger-print velvet scarf was £100, now £75; black and brown suede ankle boots were £195, now £115. Men's wear: wool check jacket was £640, now £385; single-breasted pin-stripe suit was £750, now £375.

## HOMES AND INTERIORS

□ **Bridgewater / Matthew Rice**  
789 Fulham Road, SW6 (0171-571 9033). From Jan 7-24. 4th floor, Harvey Nichols. From today for three weeks. At least 40 per cent off pottery, cookware and linens. Salad bowl was £52.95, now £32.95; 50 per cent off Matthew Rice discontinued lines.

□ **The Conran Shop**  
Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-589 7401). From Jan 7-24 for two weeks. Reductions of up to 50 per cent on ex-display upholstery and furniture. Generous reductions on discontinued ranges. Bargains in damaged goods and samples.

□ **C.P. Hart**  
Newham Terrace, Hercules Road, SE1 (0171-402 1000). From Jan 17-31. Substantial discounts on bathroom products, eg. roll-top baths from £550 to £300, WCs from £395 to £230.

□ **Damask**  
3-4 Braxholme House, New King's Road, SW6 (0171-731 3553). From Jan 7-31. Selected lines of nightwear and home furnishings 25-50 per cent off; two-tone Jacquard weave throws, single was £59, now £44; Delphine cotton tablecloths were £69, sale price £34.50.

□ **David Mellor**  
4 Sloane Square, SW1 (0171-730 4259). From Jan 3. Ten per cent discount on all standard goods, 20 per cent on most ranges of David Mellor cutlery and up to 90 per cent on slightly damaged or shop-soiled merchandise.

□ **Heal's**  
196 Tottenham Court Road, W1; 234 King's Road, SW3; Tunsgate, Guildford, Surrey (0171-636 1666). From today until Jan 18. Reductions in all departments include up to 15 per cent off selected ranges of furniture, upholstery and beds. Customers who use their account card to purchase goods can get an extra 10 per cent discount off sale prices. Ruskin dining table in solid oak was £959, sale price £769; glass hand-blown candlesticks were £35, now £28.

□ **The Holding Company**  
243-245 King's Road, SW3 (0171-352 1600; mail order 0171-610 9160). From today until Jan 11. Twenty per cent off stackable drawers; 10 per cent off fabric-covered boxes; 20 per cent off modular closet furniture and 10 per cent off towel racks.

□ **Jane Churchill**  
151 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-730 9847); Liberty, Regent Street, W1 (0171-734 1234); 13 Fitzroy Street, Cambridge (01223 323211). Check branches for dates. Sloane St sale now on and runs until Jan 15. Up to 30 per cent reduction on selected items.

□ **Jerry's Home Store**  
163 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-581 0909); 57 Heath Street, Hampstead, NW3 (0171-794 8622); The Bental Centre, Kingston-upon-Thames (0181-549 5393); Home on Four, Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-245 6251). From today until Feb 22. Twenty per cent off upholstery

and up to 50 per cent off selected items including CD slot towers from £39.95 to £19.95; Dualit toasters were £159, sale price £139 and cherrywood dining table, reduced from £1,695 to £1,395.

□ **Designers Guild**  
267 King's Road, SW3 (0171-243 7300). Sale from Jan 10-24. Warehouse: 6 Relay Road, Ariel Way off Wood Lane, W12. (Sale hotline: 0171-243 7343.) Begins Jan 17. Between 30 and 50 per cent off discounted lines; 40 per cent off seconds.

□ **Divertimenti**  
45-47 Wigmore Street, W1 (0171-935 0699); 39-41 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-581 8065). From Jan 10-24. Up to 50 per cent discount on selected items and discontinued lines. 30 per cent off hand-painted Italian tableware and 25 per cent off Milon French tableware.

□ **General Trading Company**  
144 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-730 0411); 10 Argyle Street, Bath (01225 461507); 2-4 Dyer Street, Cirencester (01285 652314). From Jan 7-24. Reductions of up to 50 per cent on merchandise throughout the shop. Twenty-five per cent off dinner services, eg. Royal Worcester "Medici Green" dinner plates were £40, now £24; 50-80 per cent off cushions and natural linens.

□ **Graham & Green**  
4, 7 and 10 Elgin Crescent, W11 (0171-727 4594). From Jan 2-31. Reductions from 20-50 per cent on many collections including Claude Pierlot, Ghost, John Rocha and Yoshiki Hishinuma; Lolita Lempicka red satin beds were £164.50, now £95; 30 per cent off Indian furniture.

□ **Habitat**  
Stores nationwide (0645 334433). From today. Save £100 on upholstery and furniture and up to 50 per cent off lighting and tableware, eg. ceramic table lamp now £10. Duvet covers from £15.

□ **Smallbone of Devizes**  
105-109 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-581 9898). From today. Reductions on kitchens, bedroom and bathroom products.

□ **The Source**  
26-40 Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 2626); Lakeside Retail Park, West Thurrock, Essex (01708 890253); 10 Harbour Parade, Southampton (01703 336411). From today for four weeks. From 20-30 per cent off selected lines. Canon Tulip double duvet was £29.95, now £19.95; bathmat from £9.95 to £5; Mexican-style throw was £34.95, now £24.95.

□ **White House**  
51 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 3521). Dec 29-Jan 10. Fifteen per cent off stock in all departments including silverware, bed linen, china, towel-ling robes, blankets and table linen.

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□ **The Monogrammed Linen Shop**  
168 Walton Street, SW3 (0171-589 4033) and Harvey Nichols. From Jan 2 for one month. Between 20 and 50 per cent off selected items.

□ **The Pier**  
Stores nationwide; for nearest branch: 0171-637 7001. From today to Jan 18. Reductions range from 25 to 50 per cent on furniture, rugs, cushions, glassware and accessories: wicker armchair was £95, sale price £69; three-drawer bedroom chest was £175, now £129.

□ **Purves & Purves**  
80-81 and 83 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-580 5233). From today to Jan 24. Up to 50 per cent off ex-display furniture, 10 per cent off any single item over £500. "Pisa" three-seater sofa and armchair was £2196, now £1,750; Ruman shelving was £483, sale price £385; Thor stool was £315, sale price £255.

□ **SCP Furniture Ltd**  
135-139 Curran Road, EC2 (0171-739 1869). From Jan 3-31. Up to 50 per cent discount on floor samples; discounts of up to 15 per cent on all items ordered during the sale.

□ **Furnitureland**  
57-63 Croydon Road, SE30 (0181-768 7100). 19 stores nationwide. Sale started. Many items reduced by up to 50 per cent. Madeira three-seater sofa was £999, now £745; king-size beds were £999, sale price £495; carpet, including underlay and fitting, from £30 per sq metre, to £20.

□ **Simon Horn**  
Furniture Ltd  
117-121 Wandsworth Bridge Road, SW6 (0171-731 1279). From Jan 2. Up to 40 per cent off discontinued lines and 10 per cent on all new orders. Reductions off coats and changing units.

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□ **SCP Sale**  
January 3 - February 1  
Contemporary furniture and objects for the home - up to 50% discount.  
Mon - Sat 09.30 - 18.30  
135-139 Curran Road  
London EC2A 3BN  
0171 739 1869





'Men are supposed to be difficult to buy for - but not my son who announced which gift he wanted with characteristic firmness'

## All present and correct - finally

So a green Christmas maketh a fat churchyard, as we say in SE10. As I write, it hasn't got properly under way yet, but already I fear that the insult to my immune system is irreversible.

It began with the Toy Saga. Men are supposed to be legendary difficult to buy for - but not my son, who announced with characteristic firmness, shortly after completing the inventory of his birthday presents in late November, that I would be getting him an X-Wing for Christmas. This is a kind of spaceship, used by either the baddies or the goodies in *Star Wars* (I neither know nor care which) to zoom about the universe in pursuit of their virtuous or wicked ends. They are widely available. Alexander assured me, from good toy shops everywhere.

I like a child who knows his own mind, so with approval and relief I noted down "Xander, X-Wing", and put the matter to the back of my mind while I got on with the great Christmas chess game that consists of translating the essence of your loved ones' personalities into some perfect but affordable object, and then presenting their objectified characters

back to them, pretty gift-wrapped and tied up with glitter ribbon.

Until, suddenly, it was Christmas week and, "what are you getting for Alexander?" asked a colleague, brandishing the Shopping Trolley Barbie that she had secured for her daughter. It flashed through my mind that if I were buying for a girl, I might be tempted to choose, say, *grande horizontale* Barbie, with a flat in Cheyne Walk and enough important jewellery to secure a dignified old age... but this thought had barely formed before it was succeeded by another, truly awful one.

So far, I have bought Alexander for Christmas precisely nothing (unless you count, which he won't, a selection of improving literature). At this rate he will be jumping out of bed on Christmas morning and running, with shining eyes and tousled curls, to find beneath the Christmas tree from his loving Mummy... an IOU.

In a fearful panic I tore off to Oxford

Street where, in a cacophony of synthetic gaiety - piped carols sung by choirs of aliens; swags of plastic holly; ho-hoing from horror-movie Santas with grog-blossom noses - I scurried from one packed toy department to another, and all in vain. Everywhere I looked there were platoons of psychotic Action Men in jungle fatigues, and legions of moronic Hercules dolls with steroid muscles and teeny loin cloths. But I didn't want an action man or a Hercules. I wanted an X-Wing. And there wasn't one.

I couldn't quite believe this was happening to me. Right at the very top of my personal Index of Proscribed

### LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

Parental Activities is joining the annual Gadarene rush for Christmas toys. And yet here I was. My back hurt, my feet hurt, and any moment I was going to start snivelling - which is what at least half the occupants of that particular toy department were already doing. But then, in a dark corner of a dusty bottom shelf, I saw it.

Not an X-Wing, but an Imperial At-At with Remote Control Walking Action.

An At-At is a sort of enormous fighting robot - a cross between a tank and one of Hannibal's elephants, which stumps along on articulated legs, emitting deadly laser blasts to right and left. Alexander and I had had a difference of

opinion when watching the *Star Wars* movie in which they appear, with me contending that if the Empire is such a formidable adversary, you'd think that someone there might have realised that the possession of knees constitutes something of a weakness in a supposedly invincible forward attack vehicle. And Alexander hot in defence of the At-At. Anyway, in the absence of an X-Wing (and I am beginning to experience doubts about their existence) a remote control At-At will do just fine, thank you.

I stuffed it into my bag, and set off at once for home, where it appears that we are still suffering from Ties Creep. This is, of course, all my fault. Usually, I manage to lure some unsuspecting chap round for a festive glass of something, and then, before he's had time to pop the cork, suggest to him that he might just like to help me bring the Christmas tree indoors. ("Yes, it is big, isn't it? No, it wasn't presented to us by the People of Norway. Very funny, I'm sure.")

This year, however, I have done the job all by myself, and it looks very nice, apart from a marked list to starboard. "Never mind," I say to Alexander, giving it a shove that sets the cherubs spinning. "I'll sort it out later. Let's get the crib out." Ours is a pretty crib, of finely modelled clay figures given to us by grandma. At one end of the piano lid we put the ox and ass and Joseph and Mary. In the middle are the shepherds and their flock, and at the far end, the Wise Men, who will progress towards the Holy Family at the rate of an inch or so a day throughout the 12 days of Christmas.

One little paper parcel remains - the infant in his manger. "Let me see," says Alexander, grabbing. "Not until Christmas." I say, snatching it away. The wrapping opens, and with a merry jangle of piano strings, Baby Jesus plunges into the bowels of the Broadwood. "Now look what you've done/made me do!" we say to each other, aghast.

We peer into the instrument. No sign of Baby Jesus. I try a gilsando. Middle E sounds with a terrible plunk. "Oh well," I say. "Look on the bright side. At least you won't be practising *Away in a Manger* again this year."

DES JENSON

## Ten remedies for that hangover

An old saw has it that some people use statistics as drunken men use lamp-posts: for support rather than illumination. Here is a dark cocktail of numbers.

A Finnish dictionary of slang has more than 100 expressions for being drunk and 29 entries for a hangover. A similar British reference book contains 48 ways to describe inebriation and a mere four for hangovers, including the "morning after".

Don't jump to conclusions. Doubtless the British sin as much as the average Finn. Or even the inhabitants of Myanmar, where the Burmese word *guangit* apparently conjures up a feeling which "makes a man feel that the clapper of the heaviest temple bell for miles around is playing tunes inside his skull".

Humans discovered alcohol thousands of years ago. The next day they discovered the hangover, and have been seeking a cure ever since.

Here, as the Christmas celebrations make way for the new year festivities, are my top ten most workable solutions.

1 Pliny, the sage of Ancient Rome, suggested "two eels, suffocated in wine". Another recommendation was cabbage and a necklace of parsley.

2 More acceptable today is the Prairie Oyster. The recipe, according to the late Harry MacElhone who ran Harry's New York Bar in Paris, a watering hole for Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, Jean-Paul Sartre et al in the 1920s and 1930s: "In small tumbler, drop without

From Prairie Oysters to fizzy vitamins - Alastair Riley offers well-ried recipes to stop your brain banging against your skull

breaking, one yolk of egg, two spoonfuls of Worcestershire Sauce, two dashes of Tabasco, a pinch of salt, pinch of pepper, one teaspoonful of malt vinegar."

3 As with all hangover cures, a metaphorical "pinch of salt" is not a bad idea. Here's an interesting one. A curious piece of street theatre takes place most mornings, often Mondays, in London's clubland. Jaded gents and the occasional woman enter the door of the chemist D.R. Harris (established 1790, by appointment, etc) and exit a few minutes later with a spring in their step.

Their secret? They forked out a quid for an on-the-spot shot of The Original Pick-Me-Up, the morning-after answer to the previous night's excess, tried and tested for the past 150 years.

This herbal tincture, which contains cloves and cardamom, combines two essential elements: it tastes horrible but it really works. Real men and women knock back the evil brew with plain water. Wimps add a fizzy vitamin C tablet to improve the taste.

4 My local chemist, faced with an OTC (chemist-speak for over the counter, ie non-prescription) requesting a hangover cure, recommends Becham's Resolve, advertised on the packet "for the morning after". More bluntly, the small print points out "Now and again, we all... drink unwise-ly... The morning after... the head-ache". The remedy contains paracetamol to relieve pain, and antacid ingredients to settle an upset stomach, as does a comparative newcomer to the market, Alka-Seltzer XS.

5 My chemist's Antipodean clientele swears by Berocca: fizzy vitamin B and C tablets, which are sold here but are a by-word Down Under for a hangover cure. If they don't work, the imbibers congratulate themselves on a particularly heavy celebration the night before.

6 Keith Floyd, the TV chef, is no stranger to the consequences of over-indulgence. His menu for an invitation to dinner to discuss his latest project once consisted of a bottle of Scotch and two pack-

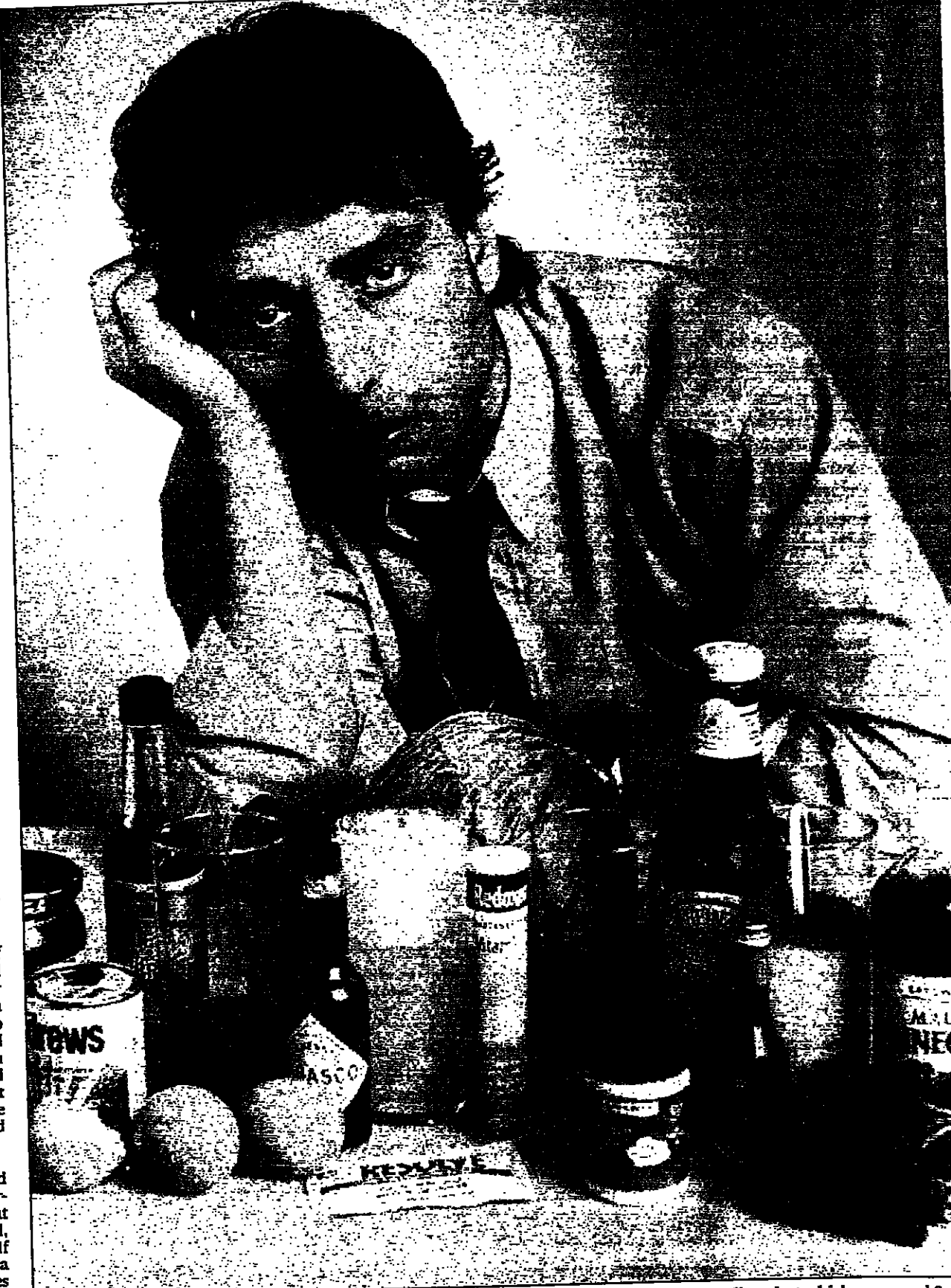
ets of Marlboro between us. Later he produced an entire book on the subject, with contents ranging from the history of hangovers to a five-day detox programme. Among his cures was the Geronimo (used to great effect after drinking too many margaritas): in a glass, put one large spoonful of runny honey and a shot of tequila. Top up with full-cream milk, add crushed ice and grated nutmeg. Stir.

7 Floyd also advocates the commonly held view that it is essential to drink lots of fluid (water) before going to bed. Kingsley Amis was a Vichy man. Drinking a pint of water after over-indulging has the added advantage that you might wake up in the middle of the night. This is an ideal opportunity to take your chosen cure before going back to sleep and waking up refreshed a couple of hours later.

8 Some people believe in the restorative powers of Fernet Branca, an Italian medicinal drink with a high alcohol content. It includes 40 herbs and one of which is logwood from Bolivia. It is not unlike Underberg, the German cure, but the bitters taste is possibly less pronounced.

9 Floyd's Geronimo is part of the hair-of-the-dog school of cures. As was Buster Keaton's: one raw egg in a glass of cold beer with tomato ketchup. Peter Dorelli, head barman at the Savoy hotel in London, suggests one-third brandy, one-third Fernet Branca, one-third crème de menthe. Shake with ice and strain into a glass.

10 Surf the Internet and you'll find a cyberbarman serving cyberdrinks at the cost of a local phone call, and no cost to your liver. If that doesn't work, there are a 17 other Web sites listing cures if you are suffering after a long evening at the new year party.



Pills, potions and vitamins, even cabbages and eels in wine... the hangover cures are endless, but which ones work?

## The name of the festive baby game

Being born on Christmas or New Year's Day sounds fine, but can have its drawbacks for the child later on

Pity the luckless Noels. Hollys, Ivys, Carols. Anastasias and Eugenis who never had a proper birthday party because all their friends and family were already prostrated by Christmas Day overindulgence.

And what about the 2,000 or so babies born on January 1 into a world of groaning adults in dark glasses, groping for the hair of the dog. A yellowing cutting of your crumpled infant visage in the local paper is no consolation for a lifetime of blighted birthdays.

But parents continue to yield to their passions without asking whether the fruit of their union nine months hence will thank them for being born on December 25 or February 29 or, worst of all, April 1 - when no one believes you when you say it's your birthday.

Midwives and maternity wards do their best to soften the blow. At the John Radcliffe Hospital at Oxford, the first baby born on Christmas Day is placed in a decorated crib. All the Christmas babies are given presents, local firms donate vouchers and baby goods, and the mothers are treated to a sherry.

The midwives at the John Radcliffe, like most of us, prefer not to work at Christmas, "but if we do, we make the most of it," says Lily O'Connor. "We club together to buy each other presents, the doctors dress up as Santa, and the midwives as fairies. We eat lunch together, and last year we all played games."



Expecting a busy festive season: midwives at the John Radcliffe Hospital at Oxford

The new mothers oblige by following a Christmas tradition of easy and rapid deliveries. "One after another they come in through the door and, when they just deliver within an hour," Ms O'Connor says, "It's because they're so determined not to miss out on the festivities, and put up with the pain until the last minute."

Alison Chevassut, a senior midwife at the John Radcliffe, saw this taken to extremes last Christmas Eve when she delivered a baby on the back seat of a car in the car park. "I stuck my head in the car and told the mother, 'Just as well you're out here - there's no room at the inn.'"

New Year's Eve babies are the same, apparently. "I'm sure alcohol has a lot to do with it," Ms O'Connor says. She also thinks New Year's Day is a better time than Christmas to have a baby. "Women who have to stay in hospital over Christmas get depressed; but at new year it's different."

And although giving birth on New Year's Day may be a raw deal, partywise, there can be consolations. Until a year ago, Farley's baby foods ran a competition for the first baby of the year, with an award of £250 for the baby and a year's supply of food worth £1,000, plus £250 for the midwife and another £250 for the unit.

The time of birth is defined as when all of the body has been born, and exact timing is crucial. The last winner was Lynette Mathieson, whose daughter Georgia was born only ten seconds into 1996, with Big Ben still striking.

The John Radcliffe also stages its own competition with the other four maternity units in the county to see which can produce the first baby of the year.

In the euphoria of new year celebrations, one thing often leads to another: the hospital has observed a large surge in the birth rate exactly nine months after New Year's Eve.

Would-be parents capable of subordinating their urges may be interested to know that Farley's Heinz intends to provide a substantial prize for the first baby of the millennium.

While practising restraint, parents could occupy their time by thinking of appropriate names for the tiny object of their far-sightedness. What about Milly, for example? Or they might look further afield, as Diana Grattan, of Wyndham, Norfolk, did. Her fourth daughter, was a New Year's baby and, after much searching, she and her husband found the middle name Etienne - "New Year's gift".

CAROLINE BRIDGWOOD

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# THE TIMES TRAVEL

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## Take a trip into the 21st century

As we prepare to see in the new year, our forward planning is likely to consist of little more than buying extra Alka-Seltzers and arguing over who will drive.

But we will have to do better than that if we want to see in the new millennium in dramatic fashion. Unbelievable as it may seem, many people are already booking holidays for the turn of the century. Most tour operators are still putting together "Millennium Eve" packages, but several have already brought out brochures, and trips are being snapped up rapidly.

If you are planning an exotic getaway, it makes sense to book as soon as possible. There is likely to be huge demand as millennium fever mounts, and those who wait could find themselves disappointed with the leftovers.

At this stage, those companies with trips "are only offering "provisional" prices, because the cost of flights and hotels could increase over the next two years. Most ask for a booking deposit, refundable if you decide to drop out later.

Here is our guide to the most exotic and tempting trips on offer so far.

### ANTARCTICA

SAIL into the new millennium surrounded by icebergs aboard the four-star *Marco Polo* on a 15-night all-inclusive Antarctica cruise holiday departing on December 22, 1999. Orient Lines (0171-409 2500) has a trip starting at Buenos Aires and stopping off at the Falkland Islands before reaching Port Lockroy, on the Antarctic Peninsula, for a champagne celebration on New Year's Eve. Prices start at £4,595 (flights included). Deposit: £459.

### AYERS ROCK, AUSTRALIA

ALL-WAYS Pacific (01494 875757) has a 21-night tour of Australia departing on December 20, 1999, with a gourmet New Year's Eve barbecue in the bush with a view of Ayers Rock. Complimentary champagne, wine and (of course) "finnies" of beer. The holiday includes stops in Melbourne, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Cairns and Sydney, plus a four-day cruise through the Great Barrier Reef. Preliminary price: £4,895. Returnable deposit (until next June): £200.

### THE CARIBBEAN

CUNARD (01703 634166) is accepting reservations on the QE2 for a 23-night cruise departing on December 12, 1999 from Southampton and stopping at New York, Fort Lauderdale, Cozumel in Mexico, Limón in Costa Rica, Cartagena in Colombia, Aruba, Grenada and Barbados. Millennium celebrations are planned while in port at Bridgetown in Barbados.

If you want to be where the

action is at the dawn of the new

millennium, now is the time to

make plans, says

Tom Chesshyre

Cunard has several other ships with millennium cruises including ones going around Java and Spice Islands, Panama and Mexico. Prices yet to be fixed. Deposit for all trips: £750.

### THE DORDOGNE, FRANCE

GET A group together and stay at one of several châteaux, houses and cottages offered by VFB Holidays (01242 240340) in the Dordogne. For example, Château de Vieux Mareuil, a 15th-century château 26 miles north-west of Périgueux, is available for three nights — including December 31 — for £450 per person; all meals included, but not the ferry crossing. It sleeps 28 people.

### THE GALAPAGOS

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (0171-730 9600) is offering a seven-night cruise around the Galapagos Islands in the Pacific Ocean aboard a 140ft three-masted schooner for a seven-night cruise, departing on December 22, 1999.

Two nights are spent at a five-star hotel in Quito, and all meals are included. Provisional price (including flights): £3,340. Refundable deposit (until next October): £300.

### THE HIMALAYAS

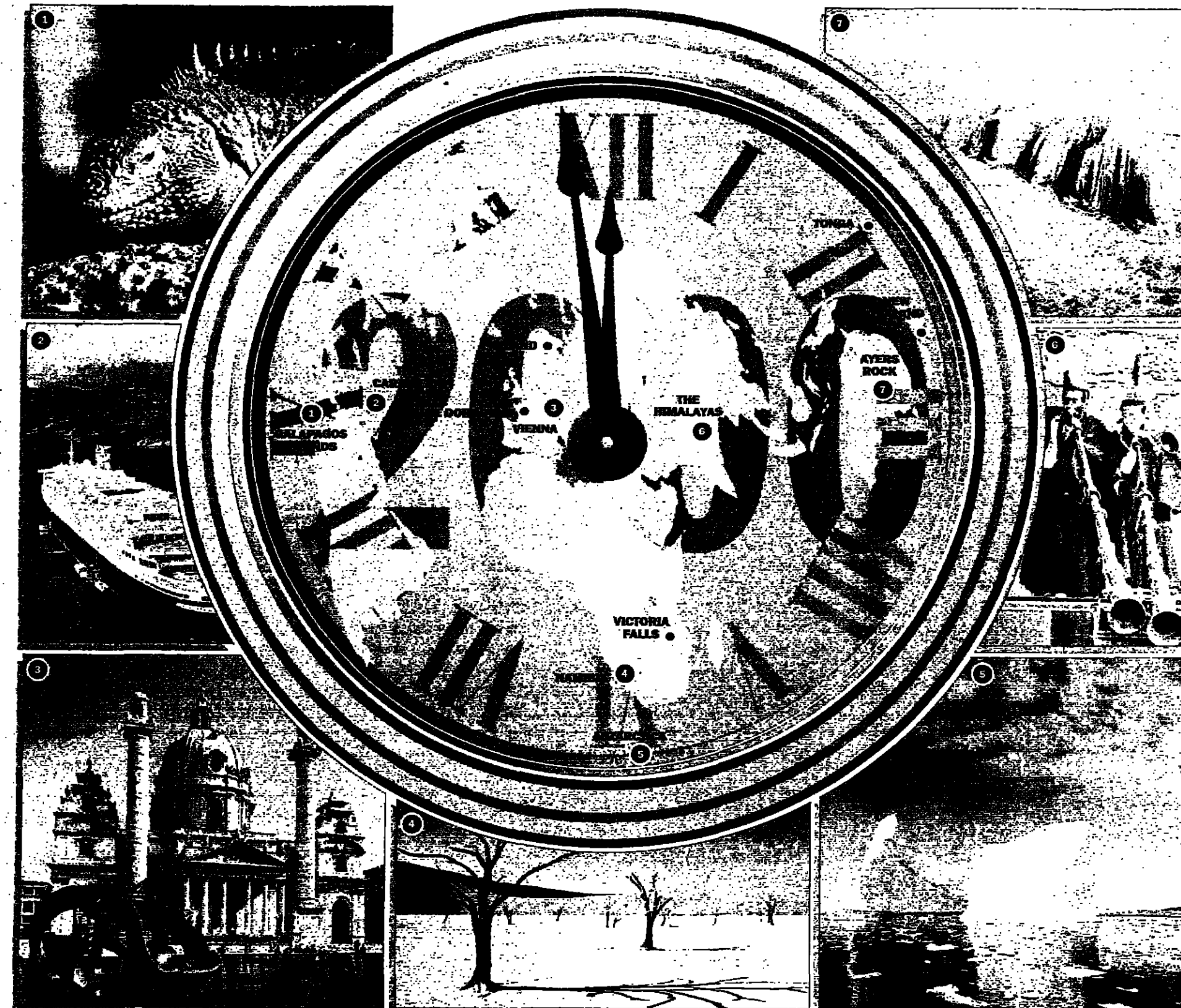
THE Ski Club of Great Britain (0181-410 2000) has heli-skiing trips on the lower slopes of the Himalayas. Skiers are dropped off by helicopter at the top of mountain runs on some of the world's best off-piste slopes. Suitable only for advanced skiers.

Accommodation is at a hotel in Mahali, a village in northern India close to several Tibetan monasteries. Provisional price for ten days is £4,000. Deposit: £500.

### NAMIBIA

ESCAPE millennium-mania on a 19-night fly-drive to Namibia departing on December 20, 1999 and organised by Sunvil Discovery (0181-232 9777). There are canyons, deserts and mountain ranges to explore by car.

To get away from it all completely, Terrace Bay, on the Skeleton Coast, is recommended for New Year's Eve. It is the most northerly point of Namibia accessible by vehicle and is characterised by desolate, open scenery. Accommo-



modation for the trip is arranged in advance and is at a mixture of basic bungalows, guest houses, tented camps and small hotels. Provisional price: £2,800. Returnable deposit (until next March): £300.

### NEW ZEALAND

CYCLE across New Zealand's North Island on a 625-mile journey that starts in Auckland and ends in Gisborne, officially the first city to see the sun rise on January 1, 2000. The 24-night trip — organised by 2000: First to the Sun (01903 218176) — departs on December 17, 1999 and has been designed for cyclists of moderate ability; more than 2,000 are expected to take part.

Accommodation is in a five-star tented village, all meals provided. Provisional price: £3,450 (flights included). Deposit: £345.

### SWEDISH LAPLAND

FOR something out of the ordinary, Scantours (0171-839 2927) has three-night trips departing on December 29, 1999 that include a millennium-night stay at a Lapland hotel made entirely of ice. The hotel, at Jukkasjärvi, sleeps 100 guests and the focus of festivities will be at a bar serving vodka in the rocks — in glasses made of ice.

In the ice hotel, guests stay in sleeping bags on wooden beds covered with reindeer skins. Provisional price is £799, including flights, all meals, a night in a three-star

hotel in Stockholm, one night in a chalet in Jukkasjärvi and one night in the ice hotel. Refundable deposit: £100.

### TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA

THINK you can handle two millennium parties? First Dawn Celebrations (0171-272 0412) has a ten-night trip departing on December 26, 1999 including a bash in Tonga (120 miles west of the international dateline), and then a flight to Western Samoa (80 miles east of the dateline and a day behind) for another celebration.

The first party will be in the grounds of the Royal Palace overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Nukualofa, Tonga's capital, and the second will be on the beach in Apia, Western Samoa's capital. Further details available in March. Expected price (flights included): about £4,450.

### VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

WATCH the sun set over Victoria Falls before seeing in the new millennium on a two-week tour of Africa organised by Abercrombie & Kent (0171-730 9600). The trip starts in Luxor and then moves on to Victoria Falls, Zanzibar, the Serengeti National Park in Kenya, and the Masai Mara National Reserve.

Millennium celebrations — a dinner and dance — are at the five-star Victoria Falls Hotel. Provisional price: £11,500 (including flights). Refundable deposit (until next October): £1,250.

### VIENNA

JET off to Vienna on Concorde with Goodwood Travel (01227 763336) on a three-night trip departing on December 29, 1999 that includes a Millennium's Eve Ball at the Hofburg Palace. Guests will be taken by horse-drawn carriage from the five-star Marriott Hotel to the palace, where there will be a gala banquet and a midnight waltz. The price for New Year's Eve 1999 is not yet finalised, but New Year's Eve 1998 is £2,695 (including flights, breakfasts and dinners); deposit: £539. Prices are expected to be higher for the millennium event.

Goodwood Travel also plans a Concorde trip taking in two millennium celebrations by jetting between the time zones. Details are expected next November.

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Zebra crossing: celebrate the new millennium with the wildlife in Africa

SKI WEEKEND A GUIDE TO THE GUIDES

# Five of the best to follow off-piste



DOUG SAGER

"FOLLOW ME" can be the most inspiring or intimidating of words, depending on how much confidence your guide has in you, and how much confidence you have in him or her. A good guide is rare. Here is a handful, picked from 15 years of off-piste skiing. Whichever guide you go with, be aware that being tied to two ends of a rope is the ultimate bonding experience.

■ SEPPI ENZIO



GIUSEPPE (Seppi) Enzo is a guide's guide, the most expert in the most challenging

off-piste resort in the Alps, Alagna in Italy, where he was born and raised. He grew up humping heavy weights to the highest mountain refuge in the Alps, the Margherita Hut at 4,559m on the Monte Rosa massif on the Swiss-Italian border. He has since spent lonely winters and busy summers as a hut warden, the Alpine equivalent of being a lighthouse keeper.

Seppi worked for 11 years in the Himalayas, climbing with Reinhold Messner and supervising the construction of a research lab at Everest base



Knowing the ropes can be a lifesaver in the Alps: the Canadian guide John Hogg (third from left) helps to pull a skier out of a crevasse on the Haute Route in the mountains between Zermatt and Chamonix

camp. Since then, he has had me at the end of his rope on several occasions, abseiling down the Malfatta and other vertiginous couloirs above Alagna. He is the veteran of numerous 60-degree plus extreme descents. "But I don't

want to do that any more. I've seen too many people die," he says. These days he concentrates on selected clients. The true but terrible test of any guide is when a client comes to grief. I watched for five hours as Seppi worked to

free one such unlucky skier entombed in ice up to his chest in a 25m-deep crevasse. In the end, Seppi had to hang upside down from a metal tripod and chip the client out with a pneumatic drill, so narrow was the gap.

■ NICK PARKS



ONE perennial caveat about British guides is that they lack that inborn sixth-sense

granted to guides who grew up and trekked year-round in their local Alps. Nick Parks more than makes up for that with a unique sympathy for the inexperienced but avid Briton introduced to the Alps: something anyone who has had to suffer an overnight bivouac with a stand-offish Swiss guide will appreciate.

"I know nothing so satisfying as seeing the grin on people's faces after seeing them safely down an off-piste run—that's why I'm a guide," Nick says.

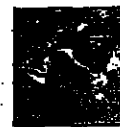
He has the infectious grin of an elf and the stamina of a mountain troll. He started to learn to ski at the age of 11 on an Erna Low package holiday to Austria. I first met him in Ste-Foy, France, with a group of off-piste beginners. What most impressed me was his patience in teaching these

tyros how to make their way through snow which changed from powder to crust to ice. The two of us went on to climb and ski the steep and treacherous Couloir-en-S off the back side of Arcs 2000. The route needs a 10ft leap off a cornice. I had stood at the top several times before with other guides, who always turned back into the resort skiing of Les Arcs. Nick gave me the confidence to take the plunge.

### HOW TO BOOK A SKI GUIDE

- In Switzerland, Verbier's Bureau des Guides (0041 27775 3366) charges £160 for one client or two, and £16 for each additional skier. Chamonix's Compagnie des Guides (0033 334 5053 0088), the oldest and most elite such organisation in the world, charges about the same price, £155, but will include up to six skiers in the group at no extra charge.
- Austria is considerably cheaper for skiers going solo; the Arlberg School in St Anton (0043 5446 341); fax 5446 2306) charging £111 for the first client and £8.50 for each extra person.
- The Italian national fee, as quoted by the Courmayeur Guides Bureau (0039 165 842064; fax 842057) is £110 for a group of up to four.
- Nick Parks and Seppi Enzo run regular ski weeks through Ski Weekend (01367 241636), the British firm with the most varied off-piste programme. Hans Solmsen works with the Ecole Fantastique (0041 27771 4141) in Verbier but can also be contacted for private tours on 0041 27771 7883 or on his Web site: [www.climbnet.com/infantastique](http://www.climbnet.com/infantastique).
- Helene Steiner works with Whistler Heli Skiing (001 604 932 4109) and can also be contacted for private trips on 001 604 938 0727. John Hogg is available for Canadian helicopter skiing or tours in the Alps at 001 259 342 0307.

■ JOHN HOGG



JOHN Hogg introduced a generation of Britons to the ski safari—

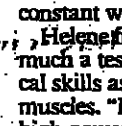
week-long powder tours using ski lifts to go up, then skiing off-piste down deserted valleys to a different resort each evening.

He started out in his native Canada as a lumberjack, worked as a World Cup ski technician and became one of the first professional helicopter skiing guides. It was in a Canadian lodge that he met his wife-to-be, who was from a mountaineering family in Andermatt, Switzerland.

John settled in Andermatt, where his innovative itineraries on the Saas Fee-to-Chamonix Haute Route built up a client base of avid skiers, the Prince of Wales among them. I shall never forget his jokey asides: "Gee, I never thought you'd make it up here" and "I told you to put on those crampons"—the former on the Strahlhorn (4,190m) and the latter as I slipped back down the Oberalpstock (3,328m).

He has now moved his family back to Canada, alarmed that his sons might grow up speaking the Swiss-German dialect. But he still spends much of every winter guiding in the Alps.

■ HELENE STEINER



HELENE has one of the most demanding guiding jobs in the world. She was the first

woman to graduate from Austria's mountain guide academy and is the most experienced female wilderness helicopter skiing guide in the world. She comes from a family of guides in tiny Leogang, but says: "I never thought about guiding as a conscious decision. We were always in the mountains and that's the way it turned out."

Recently, she helped her father and brother to establish Canada's most remote helicopter skiing operations, Klondike Heli Skiing, on the edges of the Yukon Territory. But this winter, preferring the home comforts of Whistler in British Columbia, she will be flying with the local Whistler Helicopter Skiing.

I skied hundreds of thousands of vertical feet with Helene while she was working at the world's single largest helicopter skiing operation, Mike Wiegele in Blue River, BC. Helicopter guides work

long hours in hostile terrain. Crashes and avalanches are a constant worry. Helene finds heli-guiding as much a test of her psychological skills as a strain on her leg muscles. "It's not easy to tell a high-powered business executive who's paying £3,000 for a week of skiing to stop acting like a schoolkid," she says. But they do, or she sends them home on the next chopper.

■ HANS SOLMSSEN



HANS Solmsen is a Hawaiian who left the sand and sea behind for the

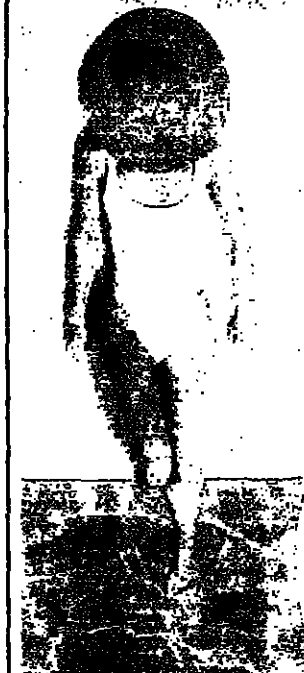
snows of Switzerland. He has the distinction of being the first American admitted into the elite, and insular, society of Swiss mountain guides. Hans's engaging and outgoing personality extends to publishing his own Web page ([www.climbnet.com/infantastique](http://www.climbnet.com/infantastique)), with photographs of recent descents and safety information on weather and avalanche conditions.

He is one of a new, young breed of mountain guides and is as ready to trade Alpine skis

for telemarks in winter as he is to free-climb with clients in the summer. Having discovered the Alps only within the past 15 years, Hans conveys an enthusiasm and a sense of shared discovery in the mountains which many older guides tend to lack.

I remember skiing with Hans years before he became a guide, but he already had a laid-back way of dealing with foolhardy skiers. Standing at the top of a steep pitch brimming with deep powder, which I was urging him to jump into, he said: "Well, Doug, you could ski down there, but I've dug out three buried skiers here this year, so hold on a minute while I get my shovel."

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"...then rosemary and sage on top, that's essential."

It was the most delicious meal ever. "I've simply got to have the recipe," I said to my husband.

The waiter must have overheard me. Literally minutes later the chef appeared at our table, pen and paper in hand. With incredible patience he wrote down, not only the recipe, but a whole stack of tips on the preparation too.

I shouldn't have been surprised. Every crew member seemed to go out of their way to make our cruise that little more special.

The atmosphere was - well - intimate. We're already planning another trip with NCL next year.

Meanwhile, I've got some serious cooking to do to help pass the time.



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Share the experience



PETER WILSON



Madrid in winter: the light is dramatically different and the people retreat indoors, to cosy bars and restaurants serving hearty, warming fare; and winter rain is always swiftly followed by sunshine and blue sky

## Death in the afternoon

Madrid has winter dishes to defeat its bitter weather. Adam Hopkins tries a chickpea broth too fuerte for an evening meal

When winter comes, I hurry to Madrid. Though quite a scruff myself, I love the sense of smartness on the edge of shadow, the bright light spilling out of windows on to elegant shopping streets like Serrano and Velázquez, and the older areas where they still make fine guitars in workshops out the back and sell religious statuary to the devout.

I love the noisy, cosy winter bars, the restaurants where diners tuck into garlicky soup or cocido madrileño, a chickpea broth soon followed by the chickpeas themselves and the mighty slabs of meat brewed up in it. These dishes celebrate the city's rural hinterland on the high Castilian plateau; its partly village essence.

No doubt it is a case of early imprinting — I lived and worked in Madrid when I was younger, teaching as so many of us do. Later, as a visiting journalist, I played a tiny role in chronicling the demise of the Franco dictatorship. And always, I loved the winter best. Today, I nurture the belief that others will find it as exciting as I do when most of the other tourists have gone home.

I have to say it can rain in winter in Madrid — sometimes quite hard and miserably — but the sun is usually out again in a few hours: the sky bright blue, as in a landscape by the Flemish master Joachim Patinir. This observation comes from Salvador Dalí, who lived here as a student, as did Luis Buñuel, who later made a film on two, and Federico García Lorca, poet-dramatist.

"But even if the sun shines, remember that Madrid is a mountain city," the advice is

offered by my journalistic friend, Tom, grandson of the Spanish writer Gregorio Marañón, and off we go into that routine about how, from the terrace of the Royal Palace, you can see the snows of the Guadarrama mountains 30 miles away, and about the sneaky wind of Madrid which, so the proverb says, will fail to douse a candle but put out a man's life.

"And chestnuts in the street," said Tom, "that's what winter means to me. Otherwise, we go into hibernation — the best bullfighters away in South and Central America, wine merchants shut up in their offices worrying about the price of Ribera del Duero."

Hibernation indeed! What is intoxicating about Madrid is the endless evidence of popular vivacity, the way the Madrileños live, with energy untamed by dull considerations such as work.

You can tell from my tone, of course, that I have indeed been in Madrid just recently. I stayed, what's more, in the Palace Hotel, where I used to put up as a youthful journalist. In those days, the vast, dark rooms were dominated by enormous dark wardrobes. When a foreign journalist picked up the phone, there would be long wheezes and short clicks as the state's recording gear switched into action. "Blast," you would think, going off to make your

assignments with the then-illegal opposition.

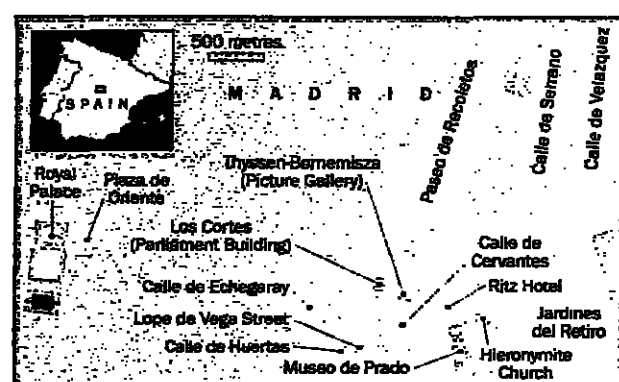
Nowadays, the Palace Hotel is a Sheraton, plugged into the modern world. Instead of ancient telephone and wardrobe, I had a stinging power-shower, built-in cupboard partially concealed by a pale Regency striped wallpaper, a computer point and a fax machine — everything possible to create a sense of light and openness and ease of communication.

One does not want to labour the comparison, but the change could be taken as a shorthand version of the change in Madrid itself: a city once shut off, but now a kind of beacon in a remade southern Europe, with its proper quota of painters and writers, film-makers, designers and disputatious journalists.

Some of them, like their forebears, still hang out in the Café Gijón in the Paseo de Recoletos, at least in winter, when the foreigners ease up. That's where I met Tom.

I stayed in bed late on the first morning — it seems very natural to do this in Madrid. Then I made a few phone calls, studied the *Gula del Ocio*, the genuinely indispensable guide to what's on in the city, and found there would be plenty to entertain me.

The three-month autumn festival, a set of episodic



Spanish and international events, was still in its dying weeks, and though I had missed good jazz the night before, there was promising-looking English-language theatre. Dance seemed specially good, with leading US groups making at least a brief appearance.

Eventually, coming in after dark, I checked the view from my hotel window and discovered that I could look up left to the parliament building. Immediately opposite, a fraction beneath window level, was the tiled roof of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, most glorious of private collections, brought to Madrid and the public domain five years ago. Down to my right, behind a line of trees, stood the Ritz Hotel. Above it, there rose the tall Hieronymite Church, where fashionable Madrid gets married. The Museo del Prado was out of sight, around the corner from the church.

The point, apart from the pleasure of it all, is that the part of Madrid the visitor will most engage with for reasons cultural — the mostly 18th-century Bourbon part — is small and gracious, while Old Madrid, that earlier Habsburg tangle, is just a stone's throw away. None of it is too difficult at all.

Summoning my energy at last, I walked into Old Madrid, out of the hotel and into the Barrio Literario or Literary Quarter. Here the great novelist Cervantes lies at rest in Lope de Vega Street, named after the lyric poet of Spain's golden age of theatre, while Lope de Vega's house is in Cervantes Street. Next door to the latter is a little hand-labour factory, typical of Old Madrid, which is still turning out crisps and *churros*, those long extrusions of deep-fried batter consumed with coffee or chocolate in the morning.

"Yes," says the friendly owner, "we are the opposition to

bed of noodles. When the soup is gone, he ladles out the meat and chickpeas, and when that's half consumed he comes around with greasy cabbage.

Walloping it down, I ask my neighbour whether he will be taking a siesta afterwards. "No," he says, "definitely not. This dish is really strong. It could be dangerous." He goes on munching. Then he leans across to assure me he was only joking. "It's strong, it's really fuerte, but it is good for you," he says.

I am trying to shock my system by giving art a miss, but even so, next day, I find myself turning into the Thyssen collection. By the time I have checked a Patinir sky and one or two other matters, the morning has disappeared. My final throw in the public arena is a visit to Seseña, maker of traditional Spanish

and go. Next, I walked down to the Royal Palace, to admire the way the traffic has been kept out of the newly reformed and now rather dashing Plaza de Oriente.

But really I was on my way to La Bola, an elegant tavern-restaurant where the best of cocido madrileño is served — at lunchtime only, cocido being regarded as a poor preparation for a quiet night. It comes in a single earthenware pot with an inward curve where a human waist would be and a little round lid on top. Warning you to protect yourself with a napkin at chest level, the waiter holds the lid on tight and pours out soup through the tiny crack on to a

capas, as worn by gentlemen, and some ladies, too. Capes are back in fashion. Tom has been telling me.

"Not so," says Florencio Córdoba, who cuts the capes. "Sales are steady, year on year. We never go out of fashion." In heavy cloth like worsted, with a mini cape at shoulder level and a neat little brooch in Salamanca style to fasten it, a good class cape will set you back some 67,000 pesetas (£250). And then you have to wear it, handling the sweep of material with all the drama of the bullfight.

I try one on but end up feeling like a wally. I'll never have the cape-handling capacity to be a proper Madrileño. I'm just a poor old northern European looking in — which doesn't mean I don't find it delightful. Actually — *viva la diferencia* — all the more so.

**MADRID FACT FILE**

MECKY FOGELING

City busse around Madrid's Palacio de Comunicaciones at the Plaza de Cibeles

■ Adam Hopkins travelled with Kirtor Holidays (0171-231 3333), which offers three nights B&B at the Palace Hotel in Madrid from £376 per person until March 12, based on two sharing a room and including flights from Gatwick. Prices for three nights at the two-star, central Hotel Londres start at £257.

■ Where to eat: Lhardy, Carrera de san Gerónimo 140 341 521 3335; as well as the deli there is no elegant 19th-century restaurant upstairs: Café Gijón, Paseo de Recoletos 21 (521 5423); La Yndia, Calle Manuel Fernández y González 3 (429 5833); Viva Madrid, Calle Manuel

Fernández y González 7 (no phone); can be crowded. La Bola, Calle de la Bola 5 (547 6930).

■ Culture: Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Palacio de Villahermosa, Paseo del Prado 8 (420 3844); Museo del Prado, Paseo del Prado (429 0770); both closed Mondays. Casa-Museo de Lope de Vega, Calle Cervantes 11 (429 9216); closed Sundays and Mondays.

■ Guidebooks: *Madrid Observed* by Michael Jacob (Pallas Athene, £9.95); *Blue Guide Madrid* by Annie Bennett (Blue Guides, £10.99).

■ Spanish Tourist Office (0171-486 8077).

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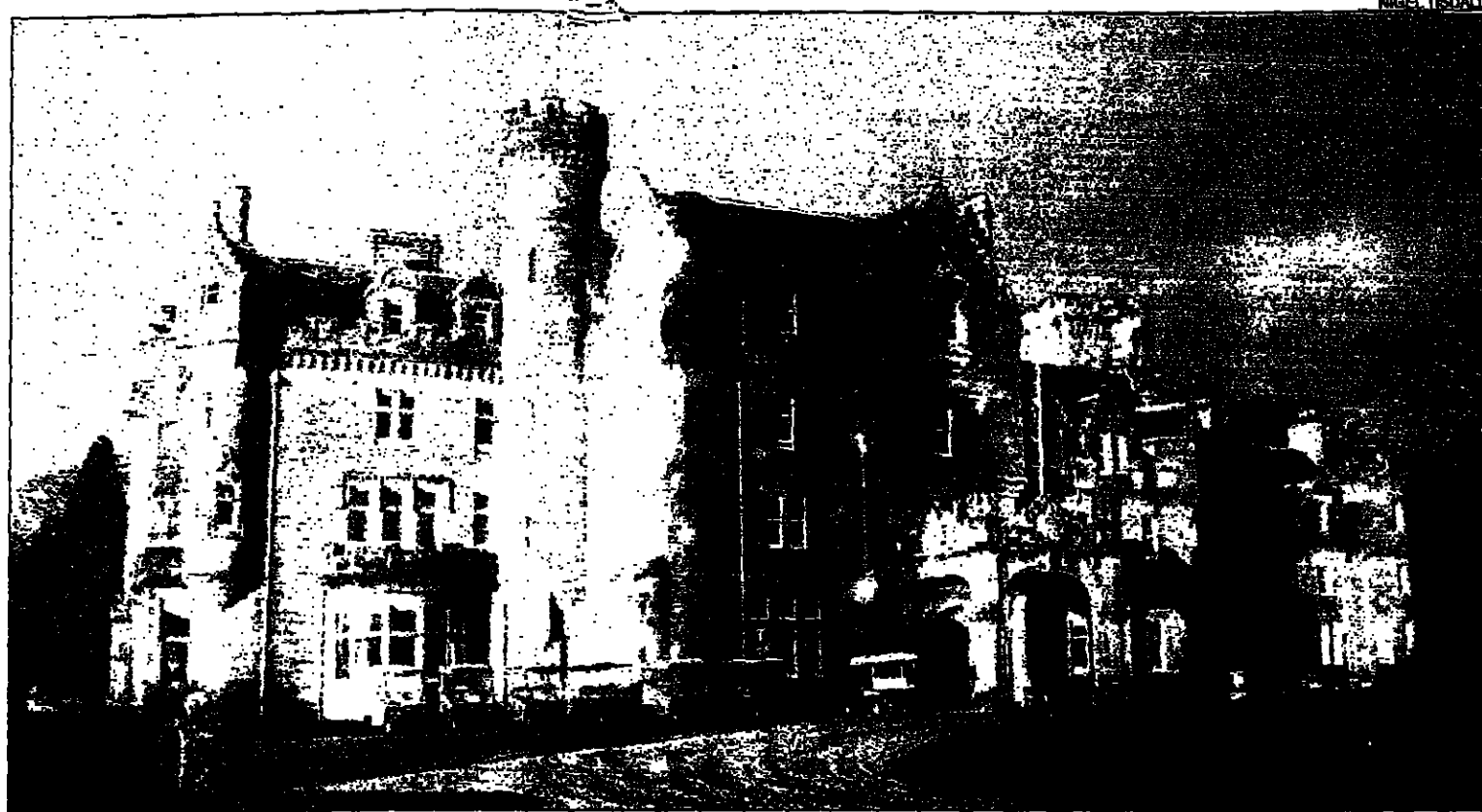
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## SCOTLAND: COUNTRY HOUSE HOTELS

Nigel Tisdall is crowned

king of an exclusive castle – at least for a day



Skibo Castle in Scotland has used its baronial history to create a comfortable holiday resort for members of the Carnegie Club

James, the head butler, was standing in the Great Hall when I arrived at Skibo Castle. A blanching version of Anthony Hopkins, he smiled at full beam as he welcomed me to a weekend in the sporrans of luxury. Flanked by a bevy of staff in tartan uniforms, he was so polite, so unflappable, so methodically concerned for my well-being, that I almost began to wonder if he was a serial killer.

Skibo, 50 miles north of Inverness, could have fallen straight off a shortbread tin. Until 1981, it was the Sutherland home of Margaret Carnegie, daughter of Andrew Carnegie, the Dunfermline-born steel magnate and philanthropist. He bought its lordly buildings almost a century ago, pouring in £2 million to create a sumptuous baronial castle overlooking Dornoch Firth, where such grandees as Gladstone, Kipling and Edward VII were entertained.

In another life, Skibo and its 7,500 acres might now be a National Trust for Scotland property, but seven years ago it was acquired by the millionaire Peter de Savary, who has poured in another £17 million in a bold attempt to create one of the most lavish all-inclusive holiday resorts in Europe.

## Swathed in tartan luxury

He is known to his staff as PDS, and in this venture, the initials might well stand for Pretty Damn Shrewd, for he observed our growing taste for holidays in all-paid-up environments such as cruise ships and cash-free hotel compounds, and applied their stress-defusing principles to the Scottish sporting estate.

The result at Skibo is that bits of Club Med, timeshare and the gentleman's club have been rolled up into a tartan comforter called the Carnegie Club. Any potential member may stay once in its stately halls, a trial sojourn that is intended to lead to an annual family membership.

Staying in an all-inclusive stately home is liberating. It empties your pockets – not just because of the cost, but because there is no need to carry anything. There is nothing to sign for, no room keys with wrist-breaking

weights, no reception, not even a bar. That worried me until I discovered there was James instead, who appeared from all corners at all hours to inquire whether guests needed "freshening up".

Everything at Skibo is Liberty Hall – providing you can forget the matter of the £550 plus VAT cost of your all-in trial night for two. Members and their guests are invited to partake of a challenging 18-hole links course designed by Donald Steel that is unfettered by tee-times.

They can enjoy salmon and trout fishing, clay pigeon shooting, archery, off-road driving, the marble-lined swimming pool and – as if the wilderness of the surrounding moors and lochs was not enough – a gym equipped with walking machines.

The morning after the night before during my stay, I awoke in an antique

four-poster bed. The sheets were crisp white linen, the tea came in bone china cups and I found I had shackled up with a hot water bottle with a wee tartan cover. Scotch mist fondled the windows of my turret room. As I lay listening to the wailing trail of the wake-up piper, I made a safe bet that breakfast would feature porridge, kippers and haddock.

Amid all of this, Skibo is a fully functioning castle, employing 100 staff and backed by a £1 million grant from the Highland Enterprise Board. It has become neither ruin nor museum, and it was heartening to see Scottish dancing in the Great Hall once more.

When Carnegie lived here he called Skibo "heaven on earth". Now anyone can enter it – at a hell of a price.

● Skibo Castle, Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3RQ (01862 894600). Prospective members of the Carnegie Club may stay at the castle for £550 a night for two people including all meals, drinks and most sporting activities. Thereafter, you must become a member: membership costs £2,500 a year per family plus residence charges of £425 a night per couple. Prices exclude VAT.

## Fine food and warm toes in the Highlands

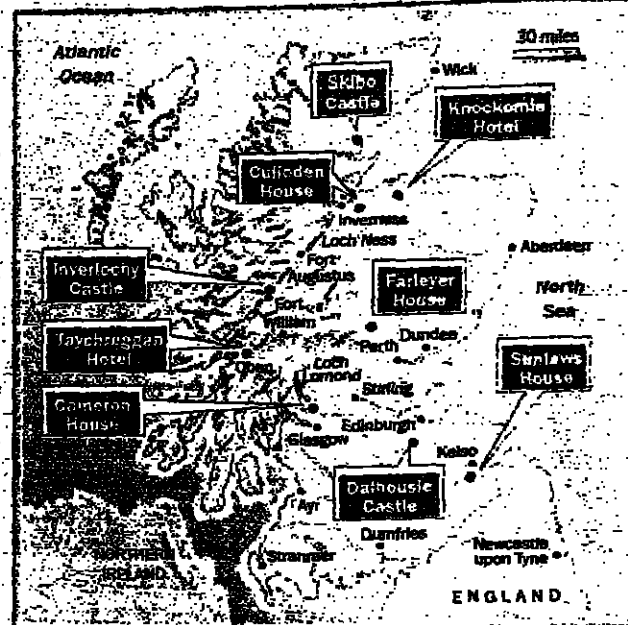
I remember being struck by a hotel in the country in Scotland (as opposed to a Scottish Country House Hotel) some 25 years ago. A Victorian mansion, presumably purpose-built as a hotel to serve the nearby railway halt and ferry pier, it was stunningly located, overlooking one of the most beautiful lochs, across which the autumn-yellowed forest climbed half the height of a craggy Munro. But the hotel clearly did not consider its outlook of interest. Every bedroom window was protected from the view by one of those three-mirror dressing tables of the 1930s. As for the food, lunch was scarcely better than a school dinner.

Things have changed since then. The business of converting pocket-draining Victorian hunting lodges and mansions into homely hostelrys began in the 1970s and now you can hardly drive a country mile without encountering a decent, often outstanding, country house hotel.

The food, too, has improved. Each of the hotels featured on these pages is proud of its kitchen, presided over by signature chefs making the most of Scotland's culinary treasures – fish, shellfish from the islands, game, venison, fruit and wild fowl.

NO relation to the Cameron Clan, Cameron House derives its name from Cam Sron (Gaelic for "crooked nose"), the spit of land on which it stands at the southwest corner of Loch Lomond.

For 330 years the house was the home of the Smollett family. For a short period in the 1970s and 1980s it was a bear park. For an even shorter period, since 1990, it has been



a hotel and in no time at all has won accolades for its food and lodging, including, two years ago, a Michelin star.

Only the public rooms and the hotel's five suites are in the original Victorian mansion. The rest are in new extensions and, despite their exteriors melding into the lochsides background, the lodgings feel much more hotel, albeit five-star, than country house.

As well as à la carte or fixed price dining, the chef will consult you and prepare six surprise courses based on your choices. Being the kind of person who prefers the accident of the radio to the certainty of the CD, it suited me perfectly.

Checking in: Cameron House Hotel and Country Estate, Loch Lomond, Dumbartonshire G83 8QZ (01389 755565; fax 759522). From January 2 to March 31, singles cost from £135

B&B doubles from £170, B&B for two: £190 for dinner B&B for two.

## CULODEN HOUSE

CULODEN House became a hotel in the 1970s and, after a faltering start, was taken over a year ago by an Anglophile American partnership.

The house sits on the ruins of Culoden Castle, where Bonnie Prince Charlie made his headquarters before the battle of 1745, and where his adversary, "Butcher" Cumberland, stayed afterwards. Seven years later it burnt down. Another 40 years went by before it was rebuilt.

The first sight of Culoden, across a greensward big enough to stage hold the Olympics, enclosed by an arboretum of sequoias, limes, beeches and conifers in every shade of green, is inspiring. Continued on page 21

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## SCOTLAND: COUNTRY HOUSE HOTELS



The Dungeon restaurant at Dalhousie Castle

From page 20  
Hidden behind the trees is the Garden pavilion, framed by the stumps of two sequoias felled by a storm and carved into a giant Highland warrior and a woman chained to a "joug", a tree where gossips were humiliated. The pavilion, with its four apartment-suites, each with its own kitchen, was built recently and matches the main house.

In the main house, each room and suite is as it was — substantial. And the original 18th-century internal shutters are still in working order.

Checking in: Culloden House Hotel, Milton of Culloden, Inverness IV1 2NZ (01463 790461; fax 792181). Special offer to readers of *The Times* until March 31: dinner, bed and breakfast £85 per person per night, based on two sharing a double room and staying at least two nights.

## DALHOUSIE CASTLE

SO rural and secluded is the setting of Dalhousie Castle that it is hard to believe the hotel is only 20 minutes from the middle of Edinburgh. It lies in wooded parkland be-

side the River Esk, with the Lammermuir Hills filling the horizon behind a meadow where horses graze and herons, mink and beaver visit. The original castle was built in the 13th century by the Ramsay family, who were ennobled with the title Dalhousie in the 17th century. The family still owns the castle, which became a hotel in the 1970s and has just been completely refurbished.

The present building is largely Victorian but a medieval heart survives. The lobby boasts intricately fan-vaulted ceilings topped with twin glass cupolas, and a double stone staircase whose brass stair-rails circle up to a landing known as the Quarterdeck because of its resemblance to the bridge of a ship. Holding it all up are three tall, windowless, barrel-vaulted chambers with enormously thick walls that are now the hotel's restaurant, known as The Dungeon.

An old well has been uncovered and is the centre-piece of the Simund De Ramseis suite. Other rooms are "themed" after family heroes or visitors to the castle — Oliver Cromwell, Sir Walter Scott, and Queen Victoria among them, the latter no doubt grateful to



The first sight of Culloden House Hotel, a handsome Georgian mansion, is across a greensward that is big enough to stage the Olympics

her then host, the tenth Earl of Dalhousie, for managing to obtain for her the Kohinoor diamond while Governor of India.

Checking in: Dalhousie Castle, Bonnyrigg, Edinburgh EH19 3JB (01875 820153; fax 821936). Until April 30, single B&B from £90; twin/double from £110; three rooms, for two people, from £140. Special offer for *Times* readers: 20 per cent off these rates, based on two sharing for a minimum of two nights.

## FARLEYER HOUSE

FARLEYER is in the heart of Scotland, a few miles up a minor B-road that crosses the striking, four-obelisk bridge over the Tay in Aberfeldy, between Stirling and Inverness.

Farleyer dates from the 16th century as a farmhouse, but when Bonnie Prince Charlie took refuge in neighbouring Castle Menzies, the castle bailliff had to give up his quarters, so he moved into Farleyer and extended it substantially. Farleyer was converted from hunting lodge to hotel only in 1989 and the rooms are spacious enough to make you feel you are a house guest rather than a customer. The great outdoors, however, is the real attraction.

Some of the Upper Tay's best salmon beats are nearby and Farleyer offers a variety of angling packages. It is a good centre for walking, too, and the hotel provides map sheets for 20-odd routes in the area. Checking in: Farleyer House, Aberfeldy, Perthshire PH15 2JE (01887 820332; fax 829430). The Virgin Hotel Collection (0800 716919) offers a two-night break, with dinner, B&B, for £175 per person. Extra nights and Sunday nights, £80. Valid until March 31.

## INVERLOCHY CASTLE

INVERLOCHY Castle is indisputably the jewel of Scotland's country house hotels, the most luxurious and one of the most expensive in the country. Queen Victoria spent a week here in 1873 as a guest of Lord Abinger, and wrote in her diary: "I never saw a lovelier or more romantic spot."

The Abinger family sold the house and its estates in 1944 to a Canadian couple, the Hobbs, and it was Mrs Hobbs who converted Inverlochy to a hotel in 1972. Since then the guest list has read like a *Who's Who* — everyone from the Queen and Charlie Chaplin to Naomi Campbell and Robert de Niro. The latest addition to the roll-call is William Hague, who took over Inverlochy for his stag party last month and worked off the hangovers by leading his mates up Ben Nevis.

On the other side of the hotel, the terrace descends to rough moorland and Inverlochy's own small loch. Inside, the galleries and gilded Great Hall rises to a ceiling frescoed with cherubs cavorting in the clouds. The restaurant is presided over by Simon Haigh, who trained with Raymond Blanc. Do not, however, expect or demand bottled water. Inverlochy deliberately disconnected from the mains some years ago and returned to its own springs and reservoirs on Ben Nevis itself. It is much, much better than anything with a lid on.

Checking in: Inverlochy Castle Hotel, Fort William PH33 6SN (01397 702177; fax 702953). Single B&B from £180 per night; twin/double from £250; suite from £390. The hotel is closed in January and February, but in March, dinner, B&B costs £165 per person, based on two sharing.

## KNOCKKOMIE HOTEL

KNOCKKOMIE Hotel lies in rural surroundings on the River Findhorn, a few miles south of Forres, and much of the hotel's rolling 25 acres is let to a local farmer. The Highland cattle grazing next to the hotel entrance are his and, when mature, some of them will make a star appearance on the hotel menu.

But it was local produce of a different order that grabbed my eye: pan-fried chanterelles with garlic, Thierry Fournot, a young Parisian, here to improve his English and flatter the Scottish palate,

had picked the chanterelles at six that morning and, he told me, they were probably the last of the season. Well, not quite — there were more delicious fungi infesting my main course of mixed filllets in a grain mustard sauce.

Knockkemie has been taking in guests since the early 1800s, when Miss Smith, the housekeeper, used to entertain the circuit judges on their progress around the northern assizes. The present building dates from 1914 and is a pretty example of the Arts & Crafts movement. The rooms are not numbered — each is named after a malt. The hotel suggests that you can order the malt your room is named after, if you cannot decide which to ask for. This is also helpful if, having ordered sufficient, you cannot remember which room you are in. Checking in: Knockkemie Hotel, Grantown Road, Forres, Moray IV36 0SG (01309 673146; fax 673290). A special offer for *Times* readers until April 30 gives dinner, B&B for £49.50 per

person, based on two sharing a double room (superior room, £59.50). Minimum stay two nights.

## SUNLAWS HOUSE

SUNLAWS lies just north of the border with Northumbria. Early English visitors were far from welcome, for the original castle was burnt down by Northumbrian bandits in 1493. That set the tone for the tinderbox history that followed — subsequent rebuildings of Sunlaws went up in flames a further three times: in 1720, 1770 and 1853.

The final Victorian mansion stands — adequately provided with fire extinguishers — in its own 200-acre estate abutting the lands of Floors Castle, home of the Duke of Roxburghe. The duke acquired Sunlaws in 1969 and, with his wife, an interior designer, converted the Jacobean-style mansion, fitting it out with antique furniture from Floors and looting the ducal cellars to furnish the wine list, as well as supplying the kitchen with fish and game from the Roxburghe estate.

Ignoring its incendiary history, log fires blaze in the drawing room, in the panelled

library that doubles as a bar, and in the hallway, right inside the front door: a welcome touch when you arrive during a nippy Scottish winter. The food wins prizes, the staff are unbeatably friendly and efficient.

There is plenty to do without even leaving the hotel grounds: tennis courts and a croquet lawn, a clay pigeon range with instruction from one of Britain's top coaches — even I managed to hit a few — a trout pond, a boat on the River Forth for serious anglers and, since last spring, a championship golf course. Riding, hawking and falconry are nearby and Floors Castle is open free to hotel guests — cinema-goers may recognise the mansion as the Greystokes of the *Tarzan* movie.

Checking in: Sunlaws House Hotel, Kelso TD5 8JZ (01573 450331; fax 450661). B&B costs £105 in single, from £180 for non sharing a twin/double; £195 for a four-poster and £245 for a suite. *Times* special offer, January 2 to February 28, gives two nights for the price of one, at the above rates, subject to availability, and a maximum stay of two nights. Quote "Times Winter Sale Offer".

## TAYCHREGGAN HOTEL

"IT'S a far cry to Lochawe!" used to be the war-cry of the fighting Campbells, flaunting the impossibility of being pursued and routed from their strongholds around the loch. Things have changed little, for Taychreggan lies at the end of a narrow and twisting single-track road.

The rooms are cosy rather than spacious — Taychreggan was, after all, an inn rather than a grand house — but it would be hard to get somewhere more secluded on mainland Britain, and the sheer beauty of the place is spectacular. The food, too, is acknowledged as outstanding, even by its rival hoteliers who have named Taychreggan "Scotland's ultimate dining experience" for two years running. Checking in: Taychreggan Hotel, Kilchrennan, by Taynait, Argyll PA35 1HA (01866 833211/833366; fax 833244). The Virgin Hotel Collection (0800 716919) offers two nights' B&B for £130 per person; extra nights at £60 per person; Sunday night £50 per person. Valid until March 31.

Times reader offers should be mentioned at the time of booking, and are subject to availability.

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JILL CRAWSHAW'S TRAVEL TIPS

# Passport to panic

THE last-minute panic to get our son off to South Africa this Christmas alerted me to the number of countries where a British passport is valid for only nine and a half years and not, as you may think, for ten. Visa and Passport Services (0171-229 4784) says countries which will not allow visitors to enter unless there are at least six months left on the passport include Singapore, Australia, the United States, Thailand, Jamaica, Malaysia, Kenya, Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Jordan and Israel. Papua New Guinea requires a full year, but New Zealand and Morocco need only three months.

Our son had to queue at the passport office in London for a ten-year passport — hardly convenient for anyone outside the capital.

A NEW service from Stansted to Nuremberg starts in February with independent airline Eurowings (01293 596699). There will be three departures each weekday, 14-day advance-purchase fares available

until the end of March will cost from £99, excluding taxes. One of Germany's liveliest cities, Nuremberg is also a gateway to Bavaria's Romantic Road — a delightful route through medieval gems such as Nordlingen, Dinkelsbühl and Rothenburg-oder-Tauber. The latter is home to a year-round Christmas shop, which sells wonderful toys and decorations — and where the queues begin in January.

## Gnome tome

WHERE are the best places for gnome-watching? According to the newly published *The Complete Book of the Gnome* (AA, £14.99), the best area is north Devon, home of both the Gnome Reserve at West Putford near Bradworthy, where more than 1,000 gnomes and pixies are assembled, and Gnomeland at Watermouth Castle near Ilfracombe, which attracts about 150,000 visitors a year. The world's most expensive gnome, said to be insured for £1 million, and the only survivor of a large 19th-century collection, is on display at Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire. If you read the book, you will never sneer at these cheeky chappies again. It



Yvonne Evans and some of the 200 gnomes at her parents' home in Haverfordwest West. Visitors come from as far as Australia to see them

seems they have an ancient pedigree stretching back hundreds of years to Scandinavian and Norse mythology — and of course John Major, our former Prime Minister, worked briefly in the family gnome business.

## Tent peg

NEW fly-drive camping holidays from Canvas Holidays (01383 644000) sound as if they are a perfect way to avoid long, hot slogs down continental motorways with

mischievous children in the back of the car. But are they worth it? With the fly-drive scheme, a 14-night holiday in early May based at Norcenni in Tuscany (ideal for visiting Florence and Siena), for a family of two adults and two

children aged two to 11, will cost £1,371. This price includes return flights, tent accommodation and Group A car hire. It rises to £2,187 in peak season. However, self-drive holidays departing on the same dates cost only

£263 and £913 respectively per party, inclusive of ferry-crossing for car and passengers, overnight stops en route at Saaburg and Valais campsites, and ten nights in Norcenni. Petrol and motorway tolls are not included in the cost.

Canvas is also offering new wildlife programmes for adults and children at six camp sites, where experts take enthusiasts bat-detecting, deer and wild boar spotting, and on other country pursuits. The price per family at one of these sites, Les Hauts in the Dordogne, is from £239-£749 for 14 nights.

## Flying high

DESPITE Richard Branson's recent balloon flop, airborne excursions are on the up-and-up, according to ticket specialist Seligo (0121-643 4321). The firm, which sells tickets and trips to 150 attractions worldwide, ranging from Hard Rock cafe to flamenco shows, is including an increasing number of helicopter and balloon rides in Europe and the United States.

A new one for the company is a Paris helicopter trip which takes you over the Eiffel Tower and the World Cup Football Stadium for £89, while a balloon ride over Walt Disney World and central Florida costs £106.

## Air fares to show taxes

PASSENGERS will find it easier to work out the cost of flying from January 1, when all airlines will have to advertise air fares inclusive of taxes, Steve Keenan writes.

Until now, airlines and their brokers have been allowed to publish attractive lead-in prices, only to add in the small print, "subject to taxes," which can add more than £50 to the price of a ticket.

The Air Transport Users' Council and consumer groups complained about the practice, which they said misled customers. Now the Advertising Standards Authority has insisted on all-in pricing.

Last month budget airline easyJet started to include in its published fares taxes such as Air Passenger Duty, which adds £10 to European flights and £20 to long-haul services.

Other airlines have argued that it will be complicated to add on taxes, which vary depending on the destination.

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THE Lanesborough is supposedly Madonna's favourite London hotel — but even she might blanch at splashing out £150,000 on a new year celebration for six. But for those with city bonuses to burn, the hotel promises an unforgettable three days. On December 30, Lanesborough butlers arrive with Louis Vuitton luggage to help you pack. Then a helicopter transports you to Heathrow, whence a private jet whisks you to St Moritz to be waited on by the hotel's staff and chefs at a private chalet. On December 31, there is skiing, plus a late lunch at Le Marmite, then a helicopter and private jet back to London. After pulling your crackers (which each contain jewellery worth £5,000), enjoy a six-course dinner, cabaret and a night in the Royal Suite at the Lanesborough. On New Year's Day you will be helicoptered home to recover. Interested? Call 0171-259 5599.

YOU can still see in the new year in the Mediterranean. Bellair Holidays (0181-785 3266) has availability on a seven-night trip to Malta, leaving from Gatwick on December 29, 30 or 31. Seven nights' self-catering in St Julian's costs from £244 per person, based on five sharing, including return flights, transfers and taxes.

JOIN THE jet set for a spot of country hopping. Premier Holidays (01787 884031) is offering 19 days travelling through Bangkok, Hong Kong, Singapore and Bali, departing on January 5, 8 or 9. Three nights room-only accommodation in each city, and five nights, room only, in Bali costs from £1,299 per person, including flights and transfers, all with Qantas.

HIT THE piste for the beginning of the season with First Choice, booked through Thomas Cook (0990 181818). Seven nights B&B at S&B in Austria, leaving on Saturday, January 3, costs from £179 per person, including flights, transfers and taxes.

JOANNA HUNTER

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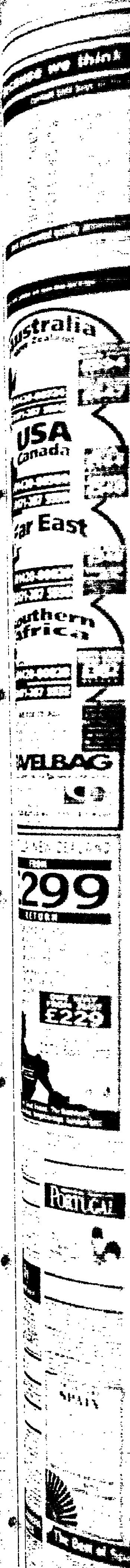
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AUCKLAND	LOS ANGELES	£281	HARARE	NEW YORK	£227
BANGKOK	SAN FRANCISCO	£244	NAIROBI	NEW YORK	£228
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BEIJING	TORONTO	£248	CARIBBEAN	NEW YORK	£282
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	LAS VEGAS	£227	AROUND THE WORLD	NEW YORK	£777

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## MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

**Q** For the past two years, I have found myself increasingly irritated by the poor table manners of my man-friend. I have never said anything to him, but I avoid inviting him to meals with friends and feel embarrassed when we are in a restaurant. He eats noisily, with loud slopping and swallowing sounds. He eats with his mouth open, occasionally spraying out debris. He talks constantly with his mouth full (and open, of course). He puts a teaspoon into his full cup of tea and leaves it there while he drinks. He covers every meal (without even tasting it) in criss-cross lines of both brown sauce and tomato ketchup — asking for these whatever the meal, venue or occasion. His tastes are unsophisticated, consisting mainly of hamburgers and biscuits. There is an enormous list of foods he will not touch and which he loudly denounces and picks out of dishes. Apart from this, he is a genuine man — a sort of rough diamond. Before I fence, how could I broach this without offending him? It is a social drawback of which he seems completely unaware. — Name and address withheld.

**A** It is time for a new year resolution. Gently suggest that when people are together for a while, their habits often begin to irritate. Invite him to write down all the things you do that annoy him, and offer to make amends in the coming year. This leaves you free to return the compliment by listing his litany of frightening misdemeanours.

**Q** Although I left a previous village several years ago, neighbours I hardly knew persist in sending me a Christmas card each year, which I have to reciprocate not wishing to hurt or be rude. Since I hardly remember them, I feel this is all becoming rather stupid. In the circumstances, what should I do? — E. Joyce, Clonmel, Co Tipperary.

**A** The polite thing to do is to reciprocate *ad infinitum*. Many people do edit their Christmas card list, but the only way to achieve this is to cease sending. Eventually the other party will get the message, although your conscience may take longer to save.

**Q** When invited out for a meal with friends, should you take a gift if so, what, wine, flowers and/or chocolates? Twenty-five years ago, it didn't occur to us to take anything. Then it became the norm in some circles and not in others. — Lady Napier of Magdala, Marlborough, Wiltshire.

**A** Contrary to common belief, it is not always advisable to take a present when dining with

friends. It is a relatively new transatlantic custom that can sometimes cause offence, particularly among older people. It remains a solecism to take a present to a formal dinner party, but in most other circumstances, a gift is usually welcome. But what? Wine is only suitable for casual suppers, and even flowers provide extra work for hosts at an invariably busy time. Opt instead for something small and exquisite, such as a box of superb chocolates, *marrons glacés* or sugared almonds.

**Q** Contagious skin diseases and polar winter conditions excepted, is it not ill-mannered for a man to shake hands with his gloves on? I was saying goodbye to someone recently and he stuck out a trendy bricking-gloved hand. I'm afraid I shook it. — Osbert Loader, Leatherhead, Surrey.

**A** I would offer my hand (not to do so is rude) after rapidly removing my glove while quietly hoping that the other man would learn from my example.

**Q** When escorting a lady, I find myself in a bit of a spin if confronted by a revolving door. Is it a matter of "ladies first", or does etiquette decree otherwise? — David Edwards, Southsea, Hants.

**A** Etiquette once decreed that a man should enter a revolving door first in order to turn it and thus enable the woman to use it effortlessly. Unfortunately, this also meant that the man had to go around twice to allow his female companion to emerge first. Nowadays, such courtly complexities are redundant, and it is simply a matter of "ladies first".

**Q** While dining with chums, I mentioned that I was to employ the local "house" artist to do a pen and ink picture of my old house. "It's not for the headed paper," I said, "because that's too naïf." One of my guests, who considers himself pretty smart, said: "Oh, I have a picture of my house on my paper." I had never had a letter from him and didn't know where to put myself. What should I do? — Name and address withheld.

**A** Your friend is not alone. Some genuinely smart people do boast such a device on their writing paper. This practice has quite a long tradition and is acceptable. Unfortunately, the results are often very questionable and can range from the incredibly smart to the unbelievably naïf. The deciding factors are always the distinction of both the artist and the property — and, of course, the taste of the owner.

John Morgan is associate editor of GQ



## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



There are 15 discrepancies between the two drawings above. Can you spot them? Answers on page 25

Dan Blair has been grounded until the new year

## PICTURE LINE



READERS are invited to suggest what Chelsea, Bill and Hillary Clinton might be saying.

This picture will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted. Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, E1 9XN. The closing date is Jan 5.

The Christmas Pictureline winner will be published next week.

## CROSS WORDS

I think it was Miles Kington who suggested that the motto of the French Naval Academy might be "To the water — the hour has come!" i.e. "A l'eau, c'est l'heure". Against Dryden's description of puns as "the lowest and most grovelling form of wit", we may set Fowler's "the assumption that puns are *per se* contemptible... is a sign at once of sheepish docility and desire to seem superior".

Puns include ambiguity based on distinct meanings of the same word (polysemy) or of similar-sounding words (homophony). A clue exploiting homophony combines definitions of the answer and a homophone of it with an indication of the identity of the sound, as in: "Particularly powerful man said to strengthen hold (5). Here, a word meaning 'to strengthen hold' is said in such a way that it sounds like a word

meaning "particularly powerful man". Sometimes a combination of homophones is possible, as in: "Arranging to have one kind of product imported, say (9). Homophony may also be used within the clue as in Profile, so to speak, from *maudlin* achievement (7). Here the definition is "profile". Heteronymy, words spelt the same way but pronounced differently, can also form the basis of a clue, as in French artist who's a saint? Doesn't sound like it (5). Making ingenious use of a well disguised heteronym is a *chape* could attend this celebration, but never does? (4,5). The most full-blooded pun in a crossword clue is: I'll cite insane pronouncement locating this building (5,4).

BRIAN GREER

Clue answers on page 25

## WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

## SKIDOO

- a. An Icelandic sleigh  
b. To quit  
c. A whaler's knot

## WAPPIE

- a. A gambling game  
b. Chewing tobacco  
c. A Welsh Australian

## WITBLITS

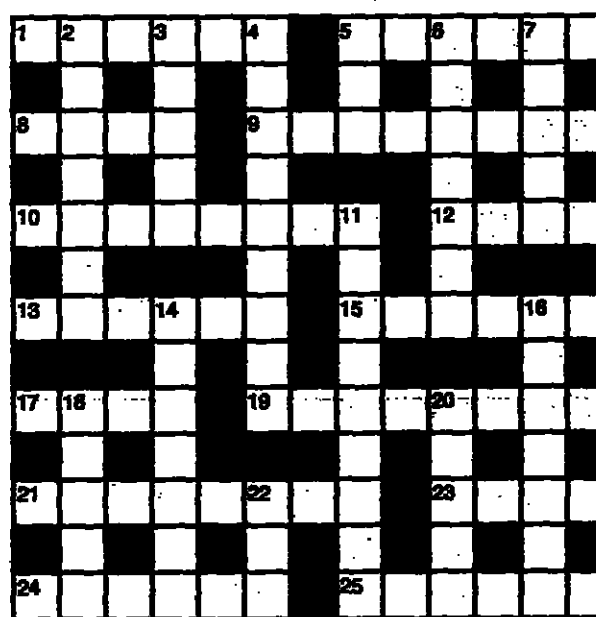
- a. Offal  
b. Brandy  
c. "Gorbliney"

## TAUNTON TURKEY

- a. A sort of herring  
b. A square dance  
c. A scapegoat

## TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1287



## ACROSS

- 1 Disorientation after flight (3,3)  
3 Gesturing; curving (6)  
5 Taran skirt (4)  
7 "The — of America is —" (Coolidge) (8)  
9 Lay up (for disease) (5)  
11 Underworld river (4)  
13 Fanatic (6)  
15 High point of heavens (6)  
17 Panel game (4)  
19 Reformation (8)  
21 Naggish old woman (8)  
23 Formal test (4)  
24 An island; a pullover (6)  
25 Asphyxiate; suppress (6)

## DOWN

- 2 One programme of series (7)  
3 Door fastener (5)  
4 The Rock (9)  
5 Used to be looked (rev.) (3)  
6 Deer meat (7)  
7 Unpleasant (5)  
11 Idle person (9)  
14 Beggar Drives spurned; one resurrected (7)  
16 Hard labour (9)  
18 Tourist collect (5)  
20 Rome coin-throwing fountain (5)  
22 Barren; tedious (3)

## SOLUTION TO NO 1286

- ACROSS: 1 Feather 5 Limbs 8 Gull 9 Cruiser  
10 Yesterday 12 Lea 13 Walter 14 Bantam 17 Ram  
18 Hairpiece 20 Amelid 21 Rifle 23 Heavy 24 Essayed.  
DOWN: 1 Piggy 2 All 3 Hygiene 4 Recede 5 Lousy  
6 Misdemeanor 7 Saracen 11 Seismograph 13 Walrus  
15 Aspires 16 Middle 18 Holly 19 Emerald 22 Fly

## TWO BRAINS

THANK you to the numerous readers who have written in with comments and suggestions about this column. In particular, thanks to Joyce Williams of Hertfordshire, Dr A. Lynch of Potters Bar and David Hannon of Loughton, three among the many who wrote in to point out that after the sequence 3, 4, 6, 12, 36 (November 22), the answer 156 is a justifiable alternative to 216. I continue to welcome ideas and suggestions from readers.

Question 1:  
Why is this a Christmas greeting?  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Question 2:  
What substance is denoted here?  
HUKLMNO

Answers on page 25

RAYMOND KEENE

## ACROSS

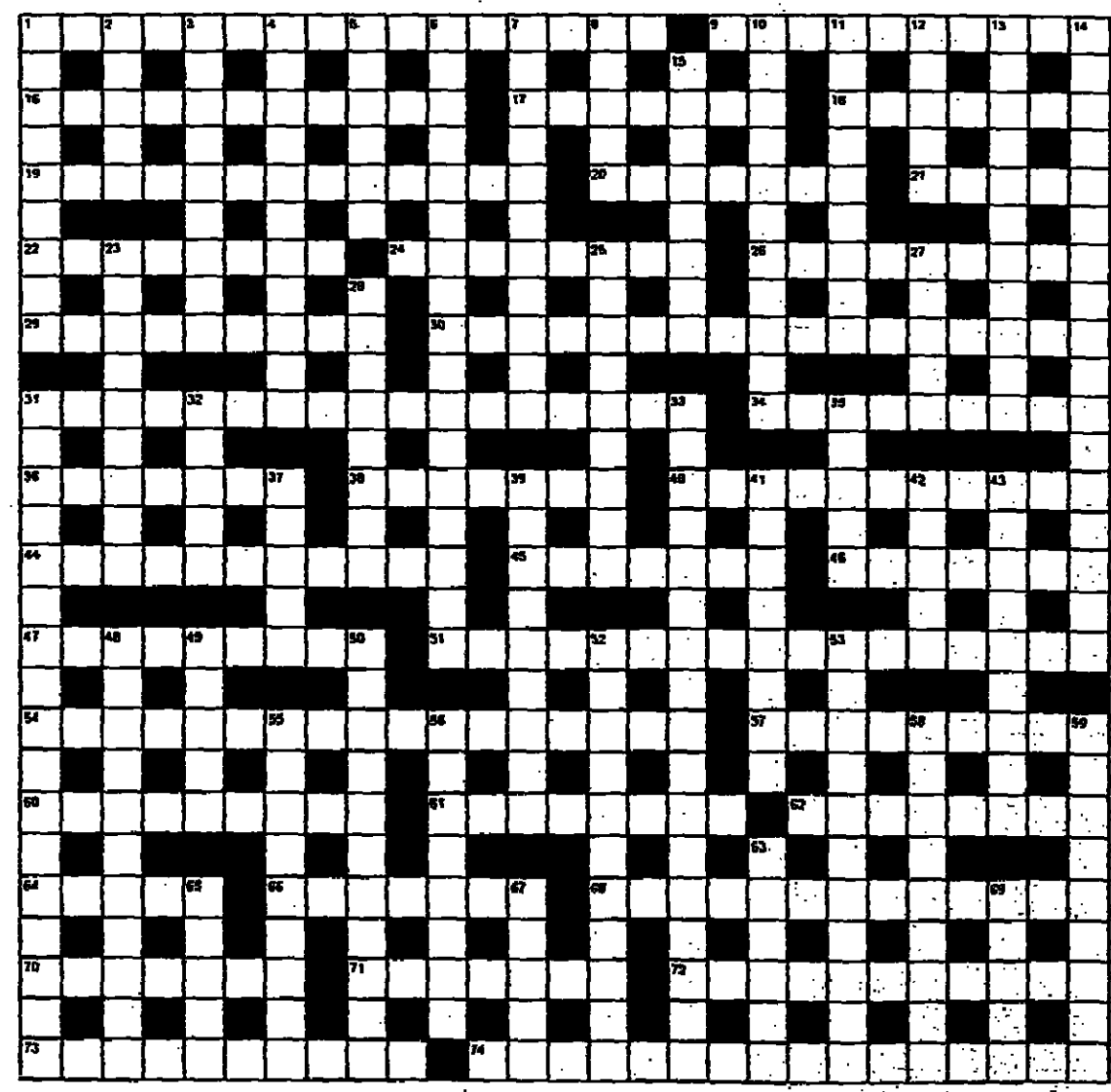
- 1 Acting to combine all objectives, as hobby takes its toll? (4,3,4,5)  
9 Native blood group not hitherto seen (10)  
16 Research community given crank's piece for reassessment (7,4)  
17 Management's disciplinary measure — result of bad hair day? (4,3)  
18 Sort of metal fastener securing bank (3,4)  
19 Various boats free to accommodate those people in certain quarters (6,3,4)  
20 Assembly members running in parallel won't be (7)  
21 Culture displayed by Elizabeth ostentatiously (5)  
22 A French author twitching, not able to produce verse (8)  
24 That hurts, being put in undecorated carriage (8)  
26 Country festival — upper-class mate rugged in it (7)  
29 Clearing what may be not half painful? (9)  
30 Classification of a particular weed brings great honour to Scot (5,2,3,7)  
31 Ecstatic utterance reaching a maximum in song tune is wild (8,2,7)  
34 Courts backing support for homeland (3,6)  
36 It's difficult to include a pair of opposing points in official record (7)  
38 Like part of computer, needing to be put back on track (3,4)  
40 Politician in debate, terribly embarrassed and angry (3,8)  
44 One may go on foot, catering for expedition (6,5)  
45 Characters providing correspondence (7)  
46 A word of thanks in tribe's language (7)  
47 Like one flapping round personage, get excited no end (9)  
51 General Montclair failed to be such a dog (8,9)  
54 Bit of microelectronics set in silicon initially (10,7)  
57 Like an interval for musicians in which drink's on the house (9)  
60 Nowhere near city centre? On the contrary (3,4,2)  
61 See Frenchman escape, returning for a beer (8)  
62 That girl kept in employment by ship as attendant (8)  
64 Marriage may be tricky for nun I love (5)  
66 Take a course, while others have to wait (4,3)  
68 Almost too late to make sharp sort of appeal before penalty (7,2,4)  
70 US reforms offering something fresh after shuffling at table (3,4)  
71 Woman's outfit said to be covered in hair (7)  
72 A Jaguar on the loose has a boy taken aboard in city (11)  
73 Members of the aristocracy try to win favour in area of London (5,5)  
74 Doorman at front of establishment takes out meat (11,5)

## DOWN

- 1 Mac obliged to be heading the same way as a young man? (9)  
2 The female harbouring one criminal (5)  
3 In such a state, facing the possibility of repossession? (9)  
4 One into client care harassed installation engineer (11)  
5 Lady with little girl in hard-wearing coat (6)  
6 Very quickly describing a striker who's escaped nasty experience (4,3,2,7,4)  
7 Fumbled on and on and on (4-7)  
8 Philosopher and officer on university river (5)  
10 People absorbing races may have endless expectation here (7,4)  
11 Offensive, turning up to interrupt ruling (9)  
12 Musician's hooking — superior oriental dance (5)  
13 Wind disturbed hornet on flowering plant (5,6)  
14 Ha-ha — my work may end here! (9,8)  
15 Unable to take account of the state of the pitch (4,4)  
23 A plant — one ruddy hard to find? (9)  
25 Fat uncle drunk with port (9)  
27 What's kept in border? I call a shrub (5)  
28 Roman general and one lesser officer invading Indian city (6)  
31 Astrologer may see planet as such where individual is in control (6,2,9)  
32 The church's part in declaring one wicked (5)  
33 Old big cat — he'd get to roar best, I fancy (5-7,5)  
35 Type of acid made a hole — I can't see what's in it (5)  
37 Dance club lacking harmony — half leaving (5)  
39 I will be right almost completely, restraining one that's narrow-minded (9)  
41 Be suspicious about little woman on street with brown coat (8)  
42 Cherubic youngsters playing on the green — last two to go (5)  
43 Article in fantastically clever English keeping to the point (9)  
48 Person with questions stirred inert TV fan (11)  
49 It could be boring physicist, having a certain effect (5)  
50 Female on ship, it's muttered, wanted emergency security for it (5,6)  
52 Mark a grave? No (5,6)  
53 Audible indications of the enemy's progress (4,7)  
55 Mammal, running amok, entering a stream with duck (9)  
56 Copper and lead items that are 'idden in a piece of furniture (8)  
58 More than one amphibian walks nursing broken toe (4,5)  
59 Class distinction spotted in India? (5,4)  
63 Tough lady? Little one to tease, then love (6)  
65 Edmond's collecting last of the requirements (5)  
67 See one end of the country (5)  
69 Children animated — not completely turning stupid (5)

## FESTIVE JUMBO CROSSWORD

Win a Methuselah of Moët & Chandon champagne and an Alfred Dunhill AD2000. The closing date is January 22, 1998. Send entries to: Festive Jumbo Crossword 143, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Winners will be published on January 24.



NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE \_\_\_\_\_

## TIMES TWO Festive Jumbo

There are no prizes for this crossword. The answers will be published on January 6, 1998

- ACROSS  
1 Take subordinate role (4,6,6)  
9 Air behind moving car; plane (10)  
16 Flying dinosaur (11)  
17 Claque (2,5)  
18 Accuses without proof (7)  
19 In tactics way (15)  
20 Check (newspaper copy) (7)  
21 June — Argentine dictator (5)  
22 Eg. Breat babies (8)  
24 Atmosphere (of place) (8)  
26 Special advantage (9)  
29 Cheap toys; new discoveries (9)  
30 Prepare for (hard, messy) work (4,2,4,7)  
31 Make superficial inroads (7,3,7)  
34 Concert, lecture halls (9)  
36 Left out (7)  
38 Moving to music (7)  
40 Gobsnatched (11)  
44 Wife of Richard III (4,7)  
45 One learning the ropes (7)  
46 Unable from car (5,2)  
47 Jane Eyre hero (9)  
51 Be impatiently idle (7,4,6)  
54 Small executive team (8,9)  
57 Textiles (4,5)  
60 Fiddling with (equipment) (9)  
61 (US) legislature (8)  
62 High (pace) (8)  
64 Banishment (5)  
66 One from Port-au-Prince (7)  
68 One grown from same ovum (9,4)  
70 Colombian/Venezuela border river (7)  
71 Resistance to movement (7)  
72 With mind elsewhere (11)  
73 One on finger with seal (6,4)  
74 (Plant) converted solar energy (16)
- DOWN  
1 Visiting briefly (7,2)  
2 Heaps (criminal) (5)  
3 Flat-headed wader (9)  
4 Food-warmer (7,4)  
5 Silly fellow (colloq.) (6)  
6 Illegal deprivation of liberty (5,12)  
7 Eponymously H. James heroine (5,6)  
8 Nigerian port (5)  
10 Bitterly under (11)  
11 Banana-like fruit (9)  
12 Bell-shaped spring flower (5)  
13 Very keen person (5,6)  
14 Wrong end-of-stick situations (17)  
15 Mexican wild cat (8)  
23 Ruler; a coin (9)  
25 Severe pain in nerve (9)  
27 That is (Laz.) (2,3)  
28 Elysian Fields plant; sort of lily (8)  
31 Warning fire (esp. at sea) (4,6,3,4)  
32 Giant Saturn moon (5)  
33 Creatures almost extinct (10,7)  
35 SW Welsh county (recently) (5)  
37 Part displaced (5)  
39 Sharp sense (9)  
41 Docility (8)  
42 David coveted his wife (11 Sam.) — Heep (5)  
43 Attractive person ( slang ) (9)  
44 Opposite of debauchery (5,6)  
49 Unpleasant (5)  
50 Acknowledgment (11)  
52 Decisive factor; matrix product (maths) (11)  
53 Lock on gun (6,5)  
54 One close by (9)  
56 Cut at eg. lute (8)  
58 Seaside course (4,5)  
59 Supply in tiny, easy stages (9)  
65 Archaic filter (6)  
67 V-shaped nick (5)  
69 Lingers old carol singers (5)



# UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

**CUP UPSET**  
England's women  
down and out  
in Madras  
PAGE 34

**LION IN  
WINTER**  
John Bentley  
takes wing  
PAGE 30

**OPEN FOR  
BUSINESS**  
A surprise  
winner of the  
King George  
PAGE 32

**WEEKEND  
MONEY**

Why banks come bottom of  
the Tessa league  
PAGE 48

How to build a Ferrari  
from spare parts  
PAGE 35

## THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT

DECEMBER 27 1997

### CHAMPIONS OPEN SIX-POINT LEAD AT THE TOP



Cole's team-mates rush to catch him and join in the celebrations after the United striker's brilliant goal against Everton at Old Trafford yesterday. Photograph: Dan Chung

## Ferguson enjoys a swift half

FROM the first to the last, it was a stroll. At times, it was an exercise in over-elaboration, at others it was careless, even sloppy. But there was great beauty amid the indolence, too, enough for Manchester United to make this FA Carling Premiership match against Everton look like an uneven battle between men and boys. The first half of the season over, they are on the home stretch now and coasting.

To emphasise just how rich their reserves are, Alex Ferguson, the United manager, left Teddy Sheringham and Ryan Giggs on the substitutes' bench yesterday and sent Peter Schmeichel home as a precaution when he could have played and used in his stead the club's third-string goalkeeper. It did not matter a jot. They took Howard Kendall's struggling team apart in the first half, then sat back and conserved their energy for the rest of the festive programme.

If United's first goal was a scramble, a point-blank header from Berg after Beckham's corner had been nodded back across goal by Johnsen, the second was worth the admission money on its own. Cole, growing in confidence with every game, chipped Myhre from 30 yards. It had Ferguson reminiscing about some of the glorious touches of Cantona.

And no matter how modest the



MANCHESTER UNITED 2  
EVERTON 0

By Oliver Holt  
Football Correspondent

victory — their sixth successive win in the FA Carling Premiership — might have been, it took United into an even more commanding lead at the top of the table. Four points clear yesterday morning, they were six points clear by the end of the day.

"It was an embarrassing 90 minutes," Kendall, the Everton manager, said afterwards. "It was men against boys. The scoreline flatters us. No one expected us to come here and get a result, but I was disappointed with the way we played. It might be Christmas, but Manchester United have had two days off. They just had Boxing Day off as well as Christmas Day. It was a long, long 90 minutes for us."

In the first half, United, and

Beckham in particular, were unstoppable. Their dominance was so crushing that Everton did not manage a shot on target until the 56th minute, and that was an ambitious long-range effort from Farrelly that did not trouble Pilkington, the United goalkeeper.

United sliced through the Everton defence for the first time in the fourth minute, when Beckham's pass and Gary Neville's run left Hinchcliffe stranded. But could only sidestep Neville's cross wide, but within ten minutes United had eased into the lead, Barrett making a hash of clearing Johnsen's header and Berg guiding it over the line.

That was the cue for an avalanche of chances. United hardly gave Everton a touch as they spread the ball confidently around midfield. Beckham always at the centre of things, but ably abetted by Johnsen, whose surges forward were a constant source of embarrassment to Everton, who are now just two points ahead of Barnsley at the foot of the table.

A minute after Berg's goal, Solskjaer ran on to a pass from Beckham and curled a centre into the box. Scholes hooked it acrobatically towards goal and Myhre, the Norwegian goalkeeper, who has hastened Neville Southall's exit from the club,

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	20	14	4	2	47	13	46
Blackburn	20	11	7	2	36	19	40
Chelsea	20	12	3	5	46	20	39
Liverpool	19	10	4	5	34	18	34
Leeds	20	10	4	6	29	23	34
Arsenal	19	9	6	4	34	22	33
Derby	20	9	6	5	34	27	32
West Ham	20	9	1	10	26	31	28
Leicester	20	8	6	6	24	20	27
Newcastle	19	7	5	7	20	23	26
Aston Villa	20	7	4	9	24	26	25
Wolves	19	6	5	8	18	26	24
Crystal Palace	20	5	7	8	18	26	22
Sheff Wed	20	4	10	21	43	30	21
Sunderland	20	6	3	11	24	30	21
Bolton	20	4	9	7	17	30	21
Coventry	20	4	8	8	17	26	20
Tottenham	20	5	4	11	18	38	19
Everton	20	4	5	11	17	29	17
Barnsley	20	4	3	13	16	31	15

reacted superbly to push it over the crossbar.

Then Beckham should have had a goal as a reward for his creativity. Beating the Everton outside trap with ease, he ran on to a ball from Butt, ignored Solskjaer in the centre and lifted his shot over Myhre. It appeared to be heading for the back of the net, but clipped the top of the crossbar instead.

United went close again after 20 minutes when Beckham, with time and space on the right-hand side of the Everton penalty area, chipped the ball to the back post, where Solskjaer nodded it back for Cole. Cole's shot

was blocked and when Solskjaer retrieved it and had another go, more Everton bodies hurled themselves in his path and cleared the danger.

The best move of the match saw Solskjaer cross to Beckham, who nodded the ball on for Cole to tap over the line. It was disallowed for offside but, ten minutes before half-time, Cole scored legitimately, receiving the ball from Butt 30 yards out, looking up as he moved slightly to his right and then drifting a chip over the stranded goalkeeper. It was vintage stuff.

The second half was tame in comparison, but United had the match won by then. "We did not make it a helter-skelter game in the second half," Ferguson said, acknowledging his understatement with a wry smile. "We need to conserve our energy. Still, it was not a bad day for us."

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-2-2): K. Pilkington — G. Neville, G. Polster (sub: B. McCool, 73min), H. Berg, P. Schmeichel (sub: J. Curtis, 88) — D. Beckham (sub: K. Polster, 65), R. Johnson, P. Scholes, N. Butt — A. Cole, G. Solskjaer.

EVERTON (3-5-2): T. Myhre — C. Short, D. Watson (sub: F. Jeffries, 48), C. Tier — E. Barrett (sub: G. Allon, 69), M. Ball (sub: C. Thompson, 77), G. Farrelly, J. O'Shea, A. Hinchcliffe — D. Cadamarteri, N. Barnby. Referee: U. Nieme.

Collymore double, page 26  
Chelsea falter, page 27  
Brian Glanville, page 28  
Forest on fire, page 29

## Left cold by Boxing Day outing with no clout

Even when I knew nothing of football, the idea of the Boxing Day fixture held a certain fascination. Why would people eschew cosy firesides, hot figgy pudding and boxes of choos to spend 90 minutes in a draughty stadium with a lot of people swearing, and not a stick of tinsel? Football must indeed be grandy and dandy, if it could countermand natural hearthside instincts as rich and potent as the Christmas hols. Boxing Day matches must be a real knees-up. Free tickets, perhaps. Mulled Fosters. Burgers with holly in. Mounted police singing carols at half-time.

So it was a bit of a shock to witness the demoralising 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge yesterday between Chelsea and Wimbledon. It was one of those rare occasions when the attractions of live sport appear completely mysterious. It didn't help that my £21 seat was in the unfinished West Stand (no roof), with a gigantic floodlight pole blocking part of the view. It also didn't help that a juvenile Chelsea supporter sitting immediately behind me kept voicing precocious opinions that, dammit, I reluctantly agreed with. ("Anyone would think De Goey had had his foot amputated," he piped, "so rarely does he kick.") Had the football been good, no discomfort would have mattered. But it's a mark of how abysmal the football was that I got my main pleasure in the match vindictively from standing up and shouting "Come on Chelsea!" on every pretext — just to block the kiddie's view with my enormous bulk and thereby spoil his day.

This was a very, very sluggish match. Too much festive panettone had evidently been consumed by those Italians, too much Bailey's by the others. Until Zola came on, midway through the second half, there was a hesitant quality to Chelsea's game that drove the fans to distraction. "Pass the ball!" they pleaded. "Kick the ball!" Aim for the goal! Go for it! All pretty

basic imperatives, you might think; but the Chelsea boys were not so sure any more. They held back, as if perpetually worried about what was required. "I'll go forward if you will," "OK," "OK what?" "Sorry, did he say OK? Are you going forward?" "Um, are you?" "I think Frank is."

Meanwhile, Wimbledon have changed a lot since I last saw them. They've lost their distinctive, unattractive long-ball game and replaced it with something technically known as dead boring. Though Joe Kinnear bawled instructions at his defence, he should have been pleased with the hard-won result. True, they

conceded a silly goal, but the goal they scored was sillier. In fact the Wimbledon goal was a classic of Crazy Gang farce, with Chelsea's keeper Ed ("Clueless") de Goey inexplicably rushing out of his goal diagonally right, just as the ball shot in diagonally left. Comedy is all about timing, you know. All this goal needed was for De Goey's trousers to fall down as well.

"De Goey is just a liability," pronounced the child behind. And the four-eyes was right. Good grief, did De Goey need the loo, or something? Was he called to the phone? Either way, it's not something you see very often in the Premiership — a goalie apparently saying "Won't be a tick," when the ball is coming upfield towards him. Goalies almost never say "Won't be a tick," during a football match. Ed. It can be taken as an invitation to the other side.

So the Boxing Day fixture wasn't quite the Christmas present I'd expected, especially when it started raining (and I got wet). True, I'd seen Stamford Bridge for the first time, but I'd also spent 25 minutes in a queue for my tickets. My car got a parking ticket in true festive manner. And when I got home, the cat had polished off the figgy pudding. I'm so glad I asserted my right to stand up repeatedly and ruin Top-of-the-Form's day out. It made this a Boxing Day to remember, after all.

**LYNNE TRUSS**  
**'Good grief, did De Goey need the loo or something?'**

Give me, good Lord, a taste

St Thomas More

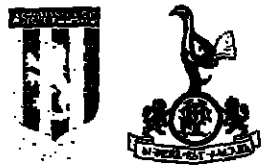
for it is written

Luke

## FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Tottenham's failings exposed as defeat continues descent into relegation trouble

## Collymore spurs Villa to emphatic victory



ASTON VILLA 4  
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR 1  
By Rob Hughes

TOTTENHAM Hotspur, sliding to their eighth defeat in 11 games, will need more than their ghost of Christmas past, Jürgen Klinsmann, to stop the dreadful free fall towards relegation. But Aston Villa, inevitably with their own enigma, Stan Collymore, erupting into potent and ultimately thrilling goal power, overwhelmed the London club yesterday and brought this magnificent Midlands bastion of the game back to full, throbbing enjoyment.

Whether Tottenham's dearest wish is for an ageing talisman, or whether indeed Klinsmann, with his wage of £35,000 a match, will only exacerbate any rifts in the camp, will be seen. Integrating him will be the problem for the new coach, Christian Gross, but David Platt, who returns to White Hart Lane in the new year as director of football, said pointedly at half-time: "Our major problem is that we've no one holding the ball up in attack."

Klinsmann, though his goal ratio in half a season with Sampdoria is no better than Collymore's, no better than Ferdinand's, is certainly a man of control and thought, but yesterday the problems for Tottenham lay in all departments. Ginola was pouring from a distance, not set at the interval, not hungry enough to go in search of it. Thus, in that entire first half, did Tottenham create a solitary chance, a pinpoint cross from the right by Fox met in the air



Ginola, left, the Tottenham Hotspur forward, beats Scimeca in the air at Villa Park yesterday. Photograph: Mark Thompson/Airsport

by Iversen, whose header was misdirected across the face of the goal. Villa? Much, much better. Their front two, Collymore and Milosevic, each put in the effort, Milosevic running wide to the flanks, getting his head down and doggedly dribbling the ball infield, while Collymore lurked deep, shrugged those massive shoulders

and attempted to find the way to the net from distance.

Collymore, seemingly unperturbed by the police charge that he assaulted the mother of his two-year-old son, Thomas, on Christmas Eve, attempted to beat Walker with right and left foot from 25 yards. The first dropped over the bar, the second was two

feet wide, but this was Collymore changing his arm with the lust for goal that made his reputation with Nottingham Forest.

There was life in the game, too, with first Mabbitt needing treatment for a head wound, then Sinton being taken off on a stretcher after being caught from behind by Draper. Mabbitt recovered, but almost scored in his own

net while desperately trying to dispossess Milosevic, obliging Walker to make a dramatic left-handed save at the foot of the post.

The huge, capacity Villa Park crowd finally erupted in the 38th minute, Staunton, the outstanding Villa player yet again, launched the classic counter-attack. His left

foot is unquestionably one of the best in the FA Carling Premiership, his vision is sometimes beyond the scope of others. He demonstrated both when, from wide on the left in his own half, he released the ball diagonally towards the far right.

Milosevic was given the time and room to collect it and, with his

own left foot, punished Tottenham for simply backing off him, producing an inviting centre. Draper timed his run perfectly. Carr was ineffectual in the air and Draper's header squirmed beneath the grasp of Walker. It was Draper's second goal of the season and before he could make it three a tepid match had erupted into controversial life.

It was the ineptitude of the referee, Alan Wilkie, that awoke the passions. In the 59th minute he handed, literally, an equaliser to the Londoners and then compounded that by denying Villa a penalty when Carr had handled the ball, falling backwards into the area. Wilkie gave only a free kick.

First, the equaliser. Fox, with a sharp volley, drew an elastic save from Bosnich, but when the ball was driven back into the area, it clearly struck the hand of Calderwood before dropping over the goalline. Wilkie refused all protestations and, in his own peculiar way, roused the game to fever pitch. In the 67th minute, driven forward, Collymore volleyed the ball up towards the crossbar. Walker was there, but collided with Neilson as he stretched for the ball, dropped it, and Draper was coaching on the line.

Then, either side of Grayson striking the base of a Tottenham post, Collymore became the man. His first goal was simple, dabbled in when Grayson crossed low and accurate, though Collymore had won the right with his anticipation. His second goal, the glorious finale, was a free kick straight in from almost 22 yards with that old, imperious Collymore arrogance. Right-footed, struck with bend and venom, it eluded the groping hand of Walker into the top corner. Who needs penalties?

ASTON VILLA (3-5-2) M Bosnich — U Ekeogu, S Staunton, R Scimeca, J Taylor, S Grayson, A Wright — S Milosevic, S Collymore.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (4-4-2) J Walker — S Carr, S Campbell, G Mabbitt, R Sinton, 74min, C Wilson (sub: D Anderson, 74) — R Fox, A Neilson, C Calderwood, A Carr (sub: S Carrasco, 84) — D Ginola, S Weston. Referee: A Wilkie.

## Newcastle reduced to hopeless pursuit

THE frustration that comes when you are erased from the FA Carling Premiership equation dawned with a crushing impact on Newcastle United yesterday.

Newcastle end the year a full 20 points behind Manchester United — with Kenny Dalglish's managerial alma mater, Liverpool, to come to St James' Park tomorrow. How long respectability alone will placate the Toon Army remains to be seen.

This defeat leaves Newcastle with the grim realisation that they have collected a mere two points from a possible 18 and have failed to score in five of those six league games.

Derby, managed by the former Newcastle favourite, Jim Smith, are playing well enough to earn a place in Europe next season, one of only seven sides in the Premiership this morning to have accumulated 30 points or more. Smith has achieved this with an outburst of less than half the price of Alan Shearer.

Dalglish's team selection was puzzling, for John Barnes, the only man to have looked like scoring in recent matches, and the rascally Colombian, Faustino Asprilla, were languishing on the substitutes' bench, replaced by the frail figure of the Denmark international, Jon Dahl Tomasson, and the veteran, Ian Rush.

Rush had failed to start in 11 previous matches after a knee operation and probably wished he had not started this one. He has been one of the game's truly great goalkeepers, but his glittering career has now entered the twilight period. When Dalglish tempted him from Leeds in the summer, it appeared as though nostalgia had got the better of the man who used to play alongside him in the great Liverpool side of the 1980s. To see his old friend play in such a laboured fashion must have troubled the Newcastle manager. Dalglish has had enough troubles this season without one of his



DERBY COUNTY 1  
NEWCASTLE UNITED 0  
By Neil Harman

side's mainstays, the England midfielder player, David Barry, foolishly getting himself sent off for the second time this season — and on the eve of a two-match suspension for five cautions.

Barry walked right into this red card, fouling Derby's Darryl Powell from behind when referee Mike Read was in the middle of his more compulsive card-

side's mainstays, the England midfielder player, David Barry, foolishly getting himself sent off for the second time this season — and on the eve of a two-match suspension for five cautions.

The only goal of the game arrived after three minutes when Des Harrison was adjudged, crucially, in Dalglish's opinion, to have upended Dean Sturridge from behind when the forward was about to shoot. Television re-views confirmed that Hamilton had not made contact. Stefano Eranio stroled up to beat Shaka Hislop and after that the game disintegrated into a series of feuds.

When Keith Gillespie attempted to take a quick free kick which struck Eranio standing two yards away, the Italian believed that Gillespie had kicked the ball at him deliberately.

Smith wisely took Eranio off at half-time. If he hadn't, Derby would have been the first team to be reduced to 10 men, so savage was his desire for retaliation.

The problems, though, are all Dalglish's. "Barry will have to take his punishment and the rest of us have to get on with it," said the Newcastle manager. "The penalty? He never touched him."

DERBY COUNTY (4-4-2) M Root — G Howett, D Simcox, D Yates — S Eranio (sub: J Laurson, 46min), D Powell, L Carney, C Powell — F Burton (sub: R Williams, 72) — D Sturridge (sub: D Burton, 86), P Warchouse.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (4-4-2) S Hudson — S Watson, S Howie (sub: J Barnes, 81), S Preece, A Preece — D Hamilton, D Barry, B Barlow, A Gillespie — J D Tomasson (sub: T Kitchard, 61), I Rush (sub: F Asprilla, 61). Referee: M Podd.

## Blackburn lose way in race to summit

IF THERE are any credible challengers for the FA Carling Premiership crown of Manchester United, it is becoming increasingly difficult to spot them.

Blackburn Rovers, statistically, are the best-placed among the maybes and wannabes but, against Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough yesterday, they slipped farther behind in the chase to wrench the title away from Old Trafford.

Blackburn still occupy second place, with Roy Hodgson, their manager, having transformed the side since he arrived from Internazionale in June. Few predicted before the season that Rovers would be snapping at the heels of the Premiership pace-setters yet a six-point deficit, even with the halfway stage of the campaign barely passed, appears insurmountable.

"Lift the roof off for a feast of footy," the public-address announcer had urged continuously before the kick-off yesterday. On the front cover of the match programme, it was writ large: "What seven goals to avenge, the gloves are on for a Boxing Day rematch." Wednesday clearly felt the need to atone for their 7-2 humiliation at Ewood Park in August.

What was laid on, especially in the first half, was no more than earnest endeavour with a smattering of skill and the occasional goalmouth skirmish. Rudi, the rangy Norway midfielder player, whose resemblance to Chris Waddle, the former England and Wednesday winger, is uncanny, produced a few nice touches: McKinnay offered balance and bite in the Blackburn midfield.

More, much more, was expected, though. Perhaps not from Wednesday, who are still in the infant stages of Ron Atkinson's influence as the manager, but certainly from Rovers. Penbridge may have headed off the line from Sherwood and Pressman did well to save Ripley's angled shot, but it was a poor return from an abundance of promising approach



SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 0  
BLACKBURN ROVERS 0  
By Russell Kempson

play. Wednesday had their moments, too, with Croft diverting Rudi's delightful lob against a post before the ball was scrambled to safety. Fennis, making his Rovers debut in goal in place of the unfit Flowers, also saved well from Penbridge and Carbone. It was enough to warm the hands, but hardly a feast.

Another half, another helping of indigestible festive fare. At least this time Rovers behaved in the manner of championship contenders, forcing the pace and exposing large gaps in the Wednesday defence. As the chances arrived, though, they were quickly squandered.

Sutton, on his return after suspension, was the chief culprit, dragging wide an attempt from Duff's cross and also shooting weakly at Pressman. When he did manage to get it right, with a dipping left-foot volley, Pressman made a marvellous, one-handed save.

Wednesday's response was honest but lacked guile. A touch more thought, particularly with Hendry experiencing one of his less commanding afternoons, and Blackburn could have been pushed. Carbone should have done better than shoot against the goalkeeper when put through with only Fennis to beat, and Booth and Newsome wasted chances.

Towards the end, Rovers at last generated some passion. Sutton headed against Penbridge, who was stationed on the goal line for a corner from Wilcox, Sherwood's header, from another Wilcox corner, was ruled out for handball and Gallacher drove high over the crossbar. One point, when in pursuit of Manchester United, is simply not enough.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (4-4-2) K Pressman — I Nickol, O Walker, J Newsome, D Sinton (sub: W Collins, 69min) — N Alexander, P Atherton, P Rudi, M Penbridge — A Booth, B Carbone (sub: G Whittingham, 64).

BLACKBURN ROVERS (4-4-2) A Fennis — J Barnes, S Hanchey, C Hendry, G Croft — S Ripley (sub: G Fitzol, 80), W McKinney, T Sherwood, D Duff (sub: J Wilcox, 84) — C Sutton, K Gallacher. Referee: J Winder.

## Owen quick to let his feet do the talking

IF Michael Owen is not the finished article, and one has no less than Glenn Hoddle's word for that, then Liverpool truly possess a player of prodigious gifts. The teenage striker, criticised by the England coach, has responded in spectacular fashion.

It is something when a player who turned 18 less than a fortnight ago can look the senior striker at a club that also boasts Robbie Fowler and Karlheinz Riedle, but Owen's display of pace and penetration at Anfield yesterday was of a kind that belies his tiny frame. Fowler may have outscored his young sidekick as Liverpool turned their domination against Leeds United into second-half goals, but it was Owen who caught the eye.

One way or another, Owen will be wearing an England shirt in France this summer. The Under-21s will be making their regular trip to the Toulon tournament, but on this form his skills deserve the greatest stage of all. Like Hoddle, Roy Evans is understandably keen to protect his young star, but his strike-hate makes him unthinkably. "Anybody that has pace like that is going to cause problems," the Liverpool manager said. "He is a threat all the time if we can get the ball behind the back four."

After some batterings earlier in the season, Owen is learning to take on the behemoths that inhabit FA Carling Premiership defences when he cannot hurdle away from them. He never shirked from the physical confrontation with Robert Molenaar, a man with arms bigger than the youngster's thighs, and on one memorable occasion gave the giant Leeds defender a five-yard start before cruising past like a Ferrari pulling away from a Capri at the lights.

All of Owen's efforts in the first half were not enough to break Leeds down, and with Ince and Hopkin clanking into each other in midfield there was plenty of heat but little light shed on whether either

of these teams are potential championship challengers. Both are probably battling for the runners-up spot, but Liverpool have now won three on the trot for the first time in 18 months and, although McAteer and Kyriakos have their usual moments of panic, they matched Leeds tackle for tackle. Enough said.

McAteer missed their best chance of the first half, but Liverpool needed only 55 seconds after the restart to take the lead. A long ball from Harkness appeared to carry little obvious threat until Molenaar collided with Robertson, his team-mate. Their confusion allowed Leonhardsen to knock the ball back to Owen, who lashed his shot unerringly into the corner for his tenth goal of the season. Leeds responded with typical fight, but, for the first time in weeks, that was not enough.

Liverpool had to wait until the 79th minute for their second, but it was a classy goal of the type that Manchester United specialise in — turning defence into attack in a lightning burst. McMahon, shocked — often unfairly — by Haaland all afternoon, finally wriggled free down the left. He knocked the ball into the centre for Fowler, who drilled his left-foot shot into the bottom corner.

Three minutes later, Liverpool were three up with a goal that owed everything to Owen's pace. He dashed past two defenders to the byline and his low cross allowed Fowler a close-range finish. It was perhaps inevitable that Liverpool should lapse, giving away the softest of goals when Kelly's free kick was headed in by Haaland, but James, under acute pressure with the newly-arrived Friedel on the bench, was not to blame.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2) D James — J McAteer, B T Kvarme, D Molineux, S Harrison — S McMahon, P Ince (sub: J Cunningham, 85min), J Redmond (sub: P Siergiei, 65), O Leonard — M Owen, R Fowler (sub: K Fildes, 65).

LEEDS UNITED (4-4-2) N Werry — G Harte, D Whelan, R Makenzie, D Riedel — C Kelly, D Hopkin, B Ribero, A J Haaland — J F Haaland, R Whelan. Referee: S Lodge.

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Owen celebrates his goal against Leeds United yesterday

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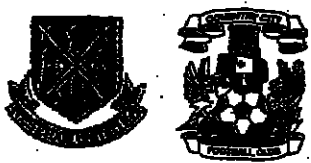
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## FOOTBALL SATURDAY

## West Ham prosper in familiar setting



WEST HAM UNITED 1  
COVENTRY CITY 0  
By David Powell

GIVEN a little cup luck, West Ham United are not due to travel out of London until February. Four of their next six known fixtures are at Upton Park, interrupted only by matches away to Wimbledon tomorrow and Tottenham Hotspur in mid-January. On the statistical evidence of the season, West Ham have a month to which they can look forward.

This was their eleventh win in 12 home matches, during which they have conceded only seven goals. However, if West Ham play like this too often, they will not be blowing bubbles much longer, let alone forever. It was an adequate display but no more.

"We can play better," Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, said with understatement. Paul Kitson scored the goal that lifted West Ham to eighth place in the FA Carling Premiership. It was as well he took the chance, for there were few at either end throughout. "It was a scrap, a battle, but another good win," Redknapp added.

West Ham were fortunate that, having lost Berkovic, their most influential player, shortly before half-time they faced only ten men for much of the second half. Boateng, in his second match for Coventry City after his transfer from Feyenoord, was sent off for two bad fouls.

Gordon Strachan, the Coventry manager, had little sympathy. "George gets sent off and the game becomes a huge problem for us," Strachan said. "I do not know how many games that it is quite a few."

Like West Ham, Coventry are into a rhythm of results. Away from home they have lost four in succession, scoring just once. If there was consolation yesterday, it was in the form of Dublin, a forward-turned-emergency defender. Dublin, Strachan said, was "excellent", but he was better than that. Playing in the middle of the back three, he ensured that Harrison and Kitson hardly won a header between them, but he was also sharp in the tackle and a determined organiser.

Only once did Harrison win an attacking header, aiming wide from a Lazaridis cross. His one



Dublin: defensive authority

other opening resulted in Hedman saving his shot with his feet. Four games without a goal means that Harrison has now lost his place as the Premiership's leading scorer to Cole, of Manchester United.

Hedman, the Swedish goalkeeper who is keeping Ogrizovic on the bench, could not be faulted for the goal. Berkovic slipping a penetrating pass to Kitson, who drove in a low shot in the seventeenth minute. When Hedman was given a chance against Kitson, who had been released on a clear path to goal, he stood up to him and blocked the run.

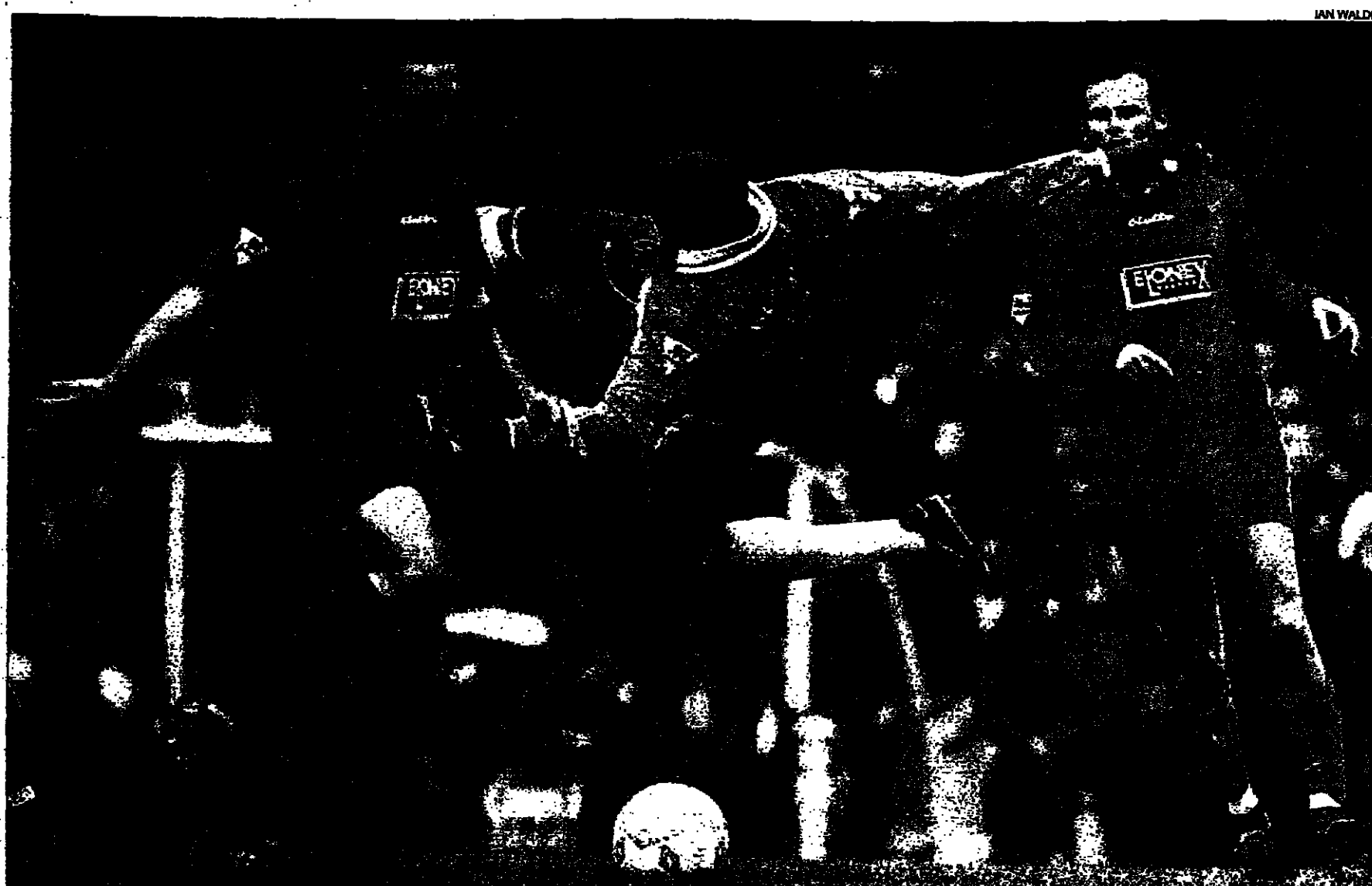
On only one other occasion did West Ham give Hedman cause for anxiety, when Lazaridis struck bar and post from wide on the left. For the West Ham match against Wimbledon, it appears that Berkovic's injured knee will keep him out and that Lama, the France international goalkeeper signed on loan, will have to wait for his debut.

Forrest had little to do but, one missed punch apart, he could not be faulted. "Craig has done nothing wrong," Redknapp said. The best of Coventry's shots, one each from Shilton and Huckerby, were gathered safely.

Shilton — first name Sam — is the son of Peter and was making his second appearance. Famous name, unfamiliar number. Shilton was wearing No 37. A shirt worth watching, though. He showed some neat touches and a sense of adventure.

WEST HAM UNITED (4-4-2): C. Forster — I. Pearce, R. Ferdinand, D. Whitworth — A. Ince, G. Lomas, P. Lunt, S. Lazaridis — E. Berkovic (sub: S. Forster, 45th), R. Kitson, J. Harrison.  
COVENTRY CITY (5-3-2): M. Hedman — R. Shaw, D. Duggan, M. Hall — R. Harrison, P. Taylor, G. Boateng, M. D. Hall (sub: K. Lightbourne, 65th, S. Shilton — D. Huckerby, M. Westall).  
Referee: G. Pope

## Chelsea player-manager lowers his title aspirations



Duberry, the Chelsea defender, is sent flying by a tackle as Jones, the Wimbledon captain, brings the ball away with Cunningham in support yesterday

## Gullit rewrites great expectations

RUUD GULLIT was looking at the bigger picture. Chelsea had drawn with Wimbledon at home, had thrown away what should have been a win through one defensive mistake and some odd ineffective attacking, but Gullit, their player-manager, appeared to be anything but downhearted.

"I think people outside expect more from us than maybe we are capable of at the moment," he said. "The fact that people say we should win these games is a compliment. It is already an improvement compared with what we did last year. Then people were saying that we could lose these games; now we have a good defence and a good attack and people think we should win."

"I am very happy with the way things are going. I must not expect too much all the time. I must be realistic. I have never said we are contenders. I have said that I take everything step by step. I want us to take our four steps forward when we have taken only one step. You cannot do things in a rush and expectation can be sometimes too much. The next step is to go on and win these games and that is

what we have to work on from today."

It was logical, sensible stuff, refreshing long-termism in a sport, a business, where short-term gain is everything, but it was extraordinary all the same. It sounded suspiciously as if Gullit was saying that Chelsea's championship challenge is less than it seems; that his team, for all their flair, their investment and their potential, are not the finished article, not yet ready seriously to trouble Manchester United's grip on the Premiership. They may be in the future, but not now.

And it was hard to argue with him on the evidence of events at Stamford Bridge yesterday. Whereas United put five goals past Wimbledon earlier in the season, Chelsea were, in truth, lucky to score one.

It was not as if they got off to a slow start, either. With just seven minutes gone, Chelsea were a goal up, their players were celebrating, the visiting team bickering among themselves and Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, was fearing the worst, perhaps even a rout. Yet, after Vialli had side-footed



CHELSEA 1  
WIMBLEDON 1  
By Peter Robinson

Flo's astute pass into the net from six yards, Chelsea had barely another shot in anger. Worse, Wimbledon did not need one. Sinclair's mis-hit back-pass giving a seasonal gift to Michael Hughes, who rounded the goalkeeper before scoring.

That, according to Gullit, knocked the stuffing out of Chelsea, but it would be more accurate to say that it gave Wimbledon the belief that they might, after all, salvage something from their trip north of the Thames, something that looked well beyond them in the 27 minutes that elapsed before their equaliser. With Thatcher

magnificent, Wimbledon, like Leeds United a fortnight earlier, defended defiantly, obstinately and increasingly confidently as Chelsea ran out of ideas.

The introduction of Zola on the hour did little to improve matters. Had he started, which Wimbledon had expected and were mightily relieved to discover would not be the case, things may have been different.

Kinnear was understandably pleased. He had come for a draw and got what he wanted — a 51st birthday present, if you like. "To go behind that early, we really feared the worst, but gradually we got back into it and there was not much to choose between the two sides as the game progressed," he said. "We are down to the bare bones with injuries and it is a valuable point for us. I'm happy."

Gullit conceded that he was disappointed with the result, if not its place in the general scheme of things, but Chelsea were frustrated. The sight of Leboeuf, normally the most pugnacious of men, furiously kicking the ball into the dugout after the final whistle said

everything about his feelings, possibly even his expectations. Gullit may believe that Chelsea are not yet ready to challenge for the title, but his players may disagree.

Even that pleased Gullit. "If the players are disappointed, then that is good," he said. "It shows that they know that they have to do better than that. They know themselves where it went wrong today and, fortunately, we have a game in a couple of days [away to Southampton], so we can put it right straight away."

"We gave a silly goal away, a sloppy goal and it was at a vital time. It could have been two or three goals to nil for us, but instead it was 1-1 and the players never fully recovered. I think, if we had not given Wimbledon that chance, however, we would have won the game. They were never going to score otherwise."

CHELSEA (4-4-2): E. de Goey — F. Sinclair (sub: S. Clarke, 50th), M. Duberry, F. Leboeuf, D. Grantville — D. Perrett, D. Wise, R. D. Williams, G. Le Seau — G. Vialli (sub: G. Zola, 60th), T. A. Flo.  
WIMBLEDON (4-5-1): N. Sullivan — I. Cunningham, D. Blackwell, B. Thatcher, A. Kinnear — N. Andrieu, S. Scholten, V. Jones, R. Earle, M. Hughes — M. Goye (sub: C. Cort, 69th).  
Referee: G. Wright.

## Bergsson special saves Bolton from the blues

EVERYTHING was in Bolton Wanderers' favour yesterday. The most pleasing prospect that any team can look forward to on Boxing Day is a home game against the weakest team in the league, yet Bolton played so wretchedly that relegation, for the second time in three years, must be a distinct possibility.

It is said, because they have some half-decent players, but the evidence is too compelling to think otherwise. They have two problems: they do not think it is necessary to score goals and they are quite happy to hand them to opponents. There is no point in mincing words: their defence is appalling. By half-time, Barnsley could have scored six goals and should certainly have scored three. When the bottom team toys with you, then you really have got problems.

They improved in the second half: they could hardly fail to. In fact, they might have won if Frandsen's late free kick had rebounded more favourably from the bar or if Blake had headed one chance straighter, and not driven another wider. That is Blake all over. He is big and strong, but his ratio of goals to chances is 1:5, which is not remotely good enough.

Colein Todd, their manager and a masterly defender in his day, must still be wondering what was going on in that awful first half. Fish, the South Africa centre half, had reformed from the flu. Bergsson, the captain, is a sound professional and Todd Jr, the manager's son, is said to be improving. On this showing, he has some little distance to go.

Before the game was 20 minutes old, Barnsley had made, and missed, four glorious chances. Ashley Ward shot wide after Fish allowed Hristov to get in a cross from the byline and then volleyed over at the end of a marvellous move involving Marcelle and Redfern. With his namesake, Gavin, in the Bolton goal to beat, he shot wide and Hristov, exchanging positions and enjoying similar freedom, hit the ball against the inside of a post.

Time and again, Todd found himself on



BOLTON WANDERERS 1  
BARNSLEY 1  
By Michael Henderson

the wrong side of the ball and Fish, for all his ability to bring the ball forward from deep positions, was far too slow to sense danger. Perhaps the Bolton midfield players should send smoke signals whenever a move breaks down. Defenders, after all, are paid in the first instance to defend, not to look pretty on the ball.

When Barnsley took the lead it was with a goal that they had thoroughly earned. Gavin Ward flapped rather feebly at Sheridan's shot and his half-saved offered Hristov a chance he headed home from an irregular stooping position. The goalkeeper, standing in for the injured Branagan, appeared shocked by such impudence. He should not have been.

Bolton failed to make a single chance before half-time and yet they went in level. It was the most extraordinary goal, as perceptive in its way as the hailstones that cracked onto the roof of the Reebok Stadium. Bergsson, collecting a clearance from the corner that his pass had helped to win, drew breath and returned the ball from fully 40 yards beyond Watson, who, by wandering six paces off his line, had exposed a skylight in the top corner of his goal.

If he plays for another ten years, Bergsson will never sniff a goal like that. Scoring, of course, is not his principal job, though he is entitled to think he could have done better than Blake when Frandsen's cross gave him a clear view of goal. The header went wide and, for a man whose job is scoring goals, that was a howler.

Bolton have scored 17 times in 20 games and only once have they scored more than one goal at home. Holdsworth, suspended yesterday, will soon be back to assist Blake, but a record of one goal in nine starts is not encouraging. Winter is drawing in. Time is running out, and so are the excuses.

BOLTON WANDERERS (4-4-2): G. Ward — G. Bergsson, A. Todd, M. Fish (sub: G. Toogood, 69th); sub: N. Cox, 66th, M. Whitson — M. Johansson (sub: A. Gunn, 66th), S. B. Frandsen, J. P. Toogood, S. Bell — P. Ewerdine, N. Usher.

BARNSLEY (4-4-2): D. Watson — N. Eaden, A. de Zeeuw, A. Moses, D. Barnard — C. Marcelle (sub: A. Liddell, 71th), E. Tinker, D. Sturges, N. Redfern — G. Hristov (sub: J. Hendrie, 65th), A. Ward.  
Referee: S. Dunn

## Nervy Arsenal struggle to subdue Leicester

WHOEVER would have thought it? Arsenal, going two goals up early in the second half, albeit in farcical circumstances, ended the game on the ropes, defending desperately against a Leicester City team belatedly committed to attack.

Well might Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager, say: "I could feel we had not enough physical and mental strength to keep our calm and keep the ball down. I thought we were in control of the game for one hour and 15 minutes. You could see that the confidence was not of the highest, and the last ten minutes were terrible, and you could see how terrible it was when it is so important to win a game and that made me nervous."

Arsenal, whose confidence was ultimately conspicuous by its absence, could give thanks that Martin O'Neill, the Leicester manager, began the game with so negative an attitude, paying Arsenal a respect that they clearly did not deserve. With Spencer Prior, one of his three regular defenders, absent, O'Neill pulled Savage into the back three and cautiously decided to use Kaarmark to man-mark Bergkamp.

Those who recently saw Leicester lose to Everton will know that, even at full strength, they are hardly an exciting team. But until, in the closing stages, they reshuffled, pushed Elliott forward, brought on Cotes and set about the Arsenal defence, they were scarcely at the races. Except, it must be said, when Emile Heskey, after eight minutes, headed Guppy's right-wing inswinging corner against the angle of post and bar.

Other than that, the first half was emphatically Arsenal's, although it brought them only a single goal. This came in the 30th minute, immediately after Ian Wright had struck a loose ball with a powerful right-foot shot, obliging Keller to fling himself to make the save.

Arsenal quickly gained a free kick on the left and Bergkamp's curling ball was expertly headed in by David Platt, who had recently headed such a goal against Manchester United.



ARSENAL 2  
LEICESTER CITY 1  
By Brian Glanville

This, after an early, reckless backward pass, was an improved performance by Platt, who had to go off with a groin injury that will probably put him out of the FA Carling Premiership match against Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane tomorrow.

Ian Wright will miss it, too. Though hardly the Wright of recent memory, he might, on another first-half occasion, also have scored when, after a strong run by the adventurous Vieira, the ball ran to him. Keller saved that shot, too. He also saved when he punched out Dixon's cross; Overmars shot, the ball was deflected but the goalkeeper stopped it.

Arsenal's second goal was worthy of the pantomime season. After Bould booted the ball downfield, Steve Walsh, attempting to find his goalkeeper, beat him instead with what might have been called an exquisite lob had it come from an attacking player. Midway through the half it might have been 3-0 and the end of the match as a contest, when Keller missed a corner. Overmars made the shot, but Savage cleared off the line.

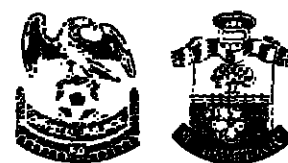
Were Leicester too cautious until that hectic last burst? O'Neill angrily denied it. "We had a grandstand finish," he said, "but I felt we never had that real self-belief that we could come here and compete against a very solid Arsenal side."

In the event, Leicester's late enterprise was rewarded with the second strange goal of the game, after 78 minutes. David Seaman, rushing out of his penalty area, tried to dribble the ball away, lost it and Lennon's shot flew past Dixon on the line.

Nine minutes from the end, Parker's left-wing corner reached Walsh on the far post and gave him a chance to atone. He very nearly did. His attempt struck the post and ended in Seaman's arms.

ARSENAL (4-4-2): D. Seaman — I. Dixon, S. Bould, M. Keown, N. Winterburn — R. Platt, P. Vieira, D. Platt (sub: S. Hughes, 58th), M. Overmars — I. Wright (sub: N. Anelka, 74th), D. Bergkamp.  
LEICESTER CITY (5-3-2): K. Keller — S. Walsh, P. Kaarmark, M. Elliott — R. Savage, N. Lennon, M. Prior, S. Campbell (sub: S. Parker, 60th), S. Guppy — E. Heskey, S. Clarke (sub: A. Cofie, 68th).  
Referee: D. Elms

## Comforts of home prove elusive for Palace



CRYSTAL PALACE 1  
SOUTHAMPTON 1  
By Nick Szczepanik

CRYSTAL PALACE's season-long search for a home win in the FA Carling Premiership will continue into 1998 after the ninth team to visit them, Southampton, returned to the South Coast with a share of the points yesterday. Palace took seasonal generosity a little too far, squandering a late chance to win the match from the penalty spot, and, at this rate, even Scunthorpe United, their FA Cup opponents in a week's time, will fancy their chances of forcing at least a replay.

"I couldn't fault them for trying," Steve Coppell, the Palace manager, said of his players. "It affects them in key situations when you're looking for them to be relaxed. They get uptight and try to force things to happen. As long as they keep trying, I won't complain."

The effort was certainly there in an open, end-to-end match, but there were early indications of the way the luck has been running for Palace at home. When Neil Shipperley, returning from injury to face his former employers, headed down Linighan's diagonal cross in the seventh minute, Bruce Dyer got a touch in front of Paul Jones, the Southampton goalkeeper, only to see the ball rebound from the foot of a post. Minutes later, Dyer turned Lundekvam, ran on and shot fiercely across Jones, but Shipperley, sliding in by the far post, could not reach it.

As an attacking force, Southampton were in evidence mainly on the break, but Warhurst was a calming influence in Palace's defence, except when he and Miller left a bouncing through-ball to each other. Hirst nipping in only to put the ball wide.

Only a minute later, however, Southampton were ahead. Palmer made a strong run down the right before knocking the ball back to Dodd, whose first-time cross was volleyed in off the underside of the crossbar by Matthew Oakley from the edge of the penalty area. "The lad deserved it," Dave Jones, the Southampton manager, said. "He's been getting into good positions and just missing out."

Dyer took a tumble in the opening minute of the second half, but the ease with which he went over under challenge, when a



Shipperley: equalising goal

chance looked on if he had managed to keep his feet, seemed to betray Palace's lack of confidence. His decision to shoot from an impossible angle rather than pick out a colleague soon after was equally disappointing.

Even so, it was a sign that Palace had stepped up the tempo and their pressure was rewarded in the 79th minute. Rodger's corner was headed on for Shipperley to drive in the equaliser from close range. With the bit now between his teeth, Shipperley struck a shot narrowly wide on the turn before being replaced by Itzhak Zohar, the Israeli international, with 20 minutes to go.

"He [Shipperley] shouldn't have played, really," Coppell said. "Tight strain, groin strain, everything. People have to play on at the moment." Dyer, too, played with an injury that was ultimately to prove fateful.

Kevin Davies could have won the game for Southampton when his shot was headed off the goal line by Warhurst, but Palace had the best chance for a late winner 11 minutes from time when Dyer hit the turf again under Dodd's challenge. Paul Alocock, the referee, awarded a penalty, but, with Dyer, the first-choice penalty-taker, feeling his injury, Zohar took the kick only to see his weak effort saved easily by Jones. "Bruce was not confident that he could hit the ball with enough power to take the kick, so Zohar stepped up," Coppell said.

CRYSTAL PALACE (3-5-2): K. Miller — A. Linighan, P. Warhurst, H. Hirst — S. Coppell — R. Girly, J. Furlong (sub: S. Burton, 60th), A. Rodger, S. Rodger, D. Gordon — N. Shipperley (sub: J. Zohar, 68th), S. Dyer. SOUTHAMPTON (4-3-2): P. Jones — J. Dodd, M. McKelvey, L. Lundekvam, F. Berai — M. Oakley (sub: R. Sledge, 58th), K. Richardson, C. Palmer — M. Le Tissier (sub: A. Williams, 81st) — E. O'Connell (sub: K. Davies, 65th), D. Hirst.  
Referee: P. Nicke



# FOOTBALL SATURDAY

## Hoddle should give youth its head at the World Cup



Owen, right, is pushing his way into England's front line

YOUTH will be served as the boxing adage, somewhat undermined by the longevity of such as George Foreman and Larry Holmes. In football, one is not quite sure. Less so than ever after Glenn Hoddle's extraordinary, gratuitous and surely excessive critique of Michael Owen: at just 18, the great hope of English football. Hoddle, plainly, is as yet unconvinced. "There are certain things he needs to stamp out of his game," the England coach said, after watching Owen play, effectively, for England Under-21 against Greece last week, "and out of his off-the-pitch situation as well. I am not going into details [why not?] but he is not the finished article everybody says he is."

Everybody? Hardly anybody, surely. Owen's admirers, of whom I am very much one, are impressed by his tremendous pace and the way he uses it, his precocious confidence, his intelligent positioning and passing, his courage to take on and resist the buffeting of bigger opponents. As things stand, Hoddle must surely feel the hot breath of a gift-horse on his face. As the England coach, it is his job to encourage young talent — of which, goodness knows, we have little enough — rather than undermine it.

Yes, I would be delighted to see Owen in England's eventual World Cup party. With Alan Shearer's recovery still uncertain, Ian Wright so sadly out of form, Robbie Fowler, Owen's fellow Liverpoolian — with whom Hoddle may somehow be confusing him — a present disappointment. Owen might prove the man England needs.

Hoddle, perhaps, might cast his mind back to his own debut for England, a brilliant display against Bulgaria at Wembley, capped by a spectacular goal. Whereupon Ron Greenwood, the England manager, dropped him from the next game with the lapidary words: "Dis-



pointment is part of football." Later, Hoddle had to endure sustained humiliation from Bobby Robson, Greenwood's successor, until at last, in England's American training camp before the

1986 World Cup, light dawned and Robson joyously compared Hoddle to his idol, Johnny Haynes. I had not realised the Road to Damascus passed through Colorado Springs. What is it about England managers? But not only about them. When Argentina were due to stage the 1978 World Cup, their manager, César Luis Menotti, decided to omit his own protégé, Diego Maradona, then 17. The actual inside left, Beto Alonso, did well enough and Argentina, after all, did win the World Cup, but Maradona's virtuosity might have made things easier. It was, of course, different with the incomparable Pelé, who might well have been regarded as the template rather than the exception who proves the rule, with his extreme youth.

Pelé was playing for Brazil at 16. At 17, he excelled in the 1958 World Cup, scoring a hat-trick against France in the semi-final, two glorious goals against Sweden in the final. Ever since Matt Busby's adventurous day, Manchester United have been prepared commendably to give youth its fling, hence the nickname of the Busby Babes. Many years ago, after a match at Chelsea, I asked Busby about this policy, to hear the simple but cogent reply: "If you don't put them in, you can't know what you've got."

The muscular Duncan Edwards was United's regular left half from the age of 17 until his cruel death after the Munich air crash at the age of 21. By then he was an England star. Later, George Best would scintillate as a teenager on United's wings. "If I'd been born ugly," he once modestly said, "you'd never have heard of Pelé." John Charles, who became the hero of Juventus, for whom he scored nearly 100 league goals in four seasons, was a dominating centre half for Leeds United at 17 and was capped for Wales at that age. Immediately before the war, there were Wolverhampton Wanderers' so-called Buckley Babes, manager Major Frank Buckley's teenagers, allegedly fed on monkey gland tablets. Jimmy Mullen played in the 1939 FA Cup semi-final at the age of 16, and went on to win England caps well after the war. Go slightly further back and we find another precocious outside left, Cliff "Boy" Bastin, of Arsenal, who moved in a cocoon of calm, and had won every honour in the game at the age of 19. Besides Owen, we have another remarkable 18-year-old in Danny Cadamarteri, of Everton, a compound of pace, power, courage and confidence; qualities displayed in their time by Pelé, Maradona, Best, Charles and Bastin, not to mention Owen. Such players are, blessedly, hard to discourage. But Hoddle should stop denigrating Owen. For his own sake.

## Barnsley's discarded hero has no regrets

Mark Hodkinson meets the player left behind by his club's historic rise

The ball was punted through the drizzle towards Bradford City's penalty area. Amid a battery of elbows and knees jostling for kicking space, Paul Wilkinson volunteered his forehead. The ball ricocheted beyond the goalkeeper, Aidan Davison, and sailed into the net.

At 3.21pm on Saturday, April 26, 1997, Wilkinson found himself at the epicentre of British football. His goal had set Barnsley on course for promotion to football's top flight after a 110-year wait: hundreds had worn the Barnsley shirt before him, but he was the chosen man.

After the match, the players, with their wives and girlfriends, celebrated long into the night and Wilkinson was fêted at every turn. He was bought enough drinks to last another 110 years and his fiancée had to step aside while appreciative fans planted beery kisses on his cheeks. "Thank you, thank you," they blubbered, and swore their everlasting love. Sentimentality is an indulgence afforded to football supporters. We reminisce, rue and romanticise until, eventually, even 4-0 home defeats take on a charm of their own. Unfortunately, football clubs are not privy to this luxury, as Wilkinson soon discovered.

As Wilkinson punched the air and danced across the turf, he was not to know that it would be his final full appearance at Oakwell in a Barnsley shirt. He had played in all but one of Barnsley's games in the first division, but fell foul of the paradox that lifting the club to a higher status also lifted him out of a job. The wealth generated by promotion enabled Danny Wilson, the Barnsley manager, to purchase Georgi Hristov from Partizan Belgrade and, a few weeks into the campaign, Ashley Ward from Derby County. Just five months after his moments of glory, Wilkinson



Now and then: Wilkinson, at Millwall, can look back happily to the day last season when his goal helped to end Barnsley's 110-year wait to reach football's top division

was collecting his boots from Oakwell and heading to London where he joined Millwall in a £150,000 deal. The Barnsley supporters had promised him the world, but the club balked at the two-year contract he felt he deserved. "It can be a harsh world, but ultimately we accept as footballers that we are commodities. I had become surplus to requirements at Barnsley," Wilkinson said.

He joined Barnsley on a free transfer from Middlesbrough, where he had spent four seasons. He was reunited soon afterwards with his former Middlesbrough strike partner, John Hendrie. The pair are efficacious: they have scored 114 goals between them in five seasons together. "I was struck with Barnsley straight away. It is a homey club but it has a lot of ambition. There was a real buzz about the town," Wilkinson said. He felt his energy at close quarters since

he lived in Cawthorne, on the outskirts of the town. While Barnsley's trademark last season was thoughtful, passing football, Wilkinson felt his role was more rudimentary. "It was a real pass-and-move team, but I gave them another dimension. I was the tallest, and since I'm not the most skilful player in the world, they tended to use me more as a battering ram and play off me," he said. At Christmas last year, Barnsley had lost just three times in 23 league matches. They have won just four games in 20 this season and have suffered the ignominy of conceding 51 league goals already. Few Barnsley fans expect anything but a fraught battle for survival, but, inevitably, there have been a few grumbles muttered into beers. Some feel that Wilson tinkered needlessly with the winning team. "I think Danny should have

given last year's team longer to come good, but I'm bound to think that, aren't I?" Wilkinson said. "I have no hard feelings towards him or Barnsley. I always look for their score first." Wilkinson's final appearance for Barnsley was against Chelsea when they were beaten 6-0 in August. He was substituted at half-time and had a spectator's view of the second-half annihilation. "I think they've learnt a lot since then and have adapted well. There is no problem at Barnsley because no one expected them to survive anyway," he says. "I've a sneaking feeling, though, that they are going to stay up. I don't think people appreciate the spirit and resolve within the club."

Instead of a season at football's top table, Wilkinson is among the blood and mud of the journeyman of the Nationwide League second division. He suffered a "whack on the ankle" last Saturday in Millwall's win against Wycombe Wanderers and has spent most of this week under treatment. "It's a lot more physical than I expected," he said. He cannot complain too vociferously since Billy Bonds, the Millwall manager, signed him chiefly because he can remember fractious encounters when he was a defender with West Ham United and Wilkinson played for Nottingham Forest. "I left him with six stitches in his forehead after one match — and he still signed me," Wilkinson said. He has moved with his fiancée to Bromley, Kent, and though he recalls his time at Barnsley fondly, he has no qualms about swapping clubs for the seventh time in his career. "I would have loved to have stayed there for another couple of seasons, but that's not what I was offered," Wilkinson said. "That's just the way it is in football."

## Spartak's brave incorruptibles earn just reward

NOT long after the Spartak Moscow players checked into the Oktyabrskaya hotel on the eve of their important Russian League match against Rotor Volgograd, the telephone began ringing off the hook. Representatives of the local *Intimdosug* — "Intimate Leisure" — firm were apparently outing for business at the bargain rate of 200,000 roubles (£20) per hour.

Oleg Romantsev, the Spartak coach, happily reported that such "provocation" was resisted and that all of his brave lads had declined the "sweet-voiced suggestions". And to be absolutely safe, they refused to walk farther than 15 metres from the hotel entrance. Spartak's clean-living souls went on to beat Volgograd and became Russian champions for the fifth time.

### Parkinson floored

Phil Parkinson, the Reading midfielder player and one of the more rugged practitioners in the Nationwide League, has been involved in his fair share of incidents in a career spanning 13 seasons. It was thus barely surprising when his two-year-old son, George, slipped over while kicking a ball around in the players' bar at Reading's Elm Park ground and fractured his left leg. A foot-to-high plaster now covers the broken limb but Parkinson Jr, like dad, should soon be back terrorising opponents.

### Tea and sympathy

Howard Wilkinson, the Football Association technical director, is not noted for his histrionics. Dour, boring even, but never over-demonstrative ... or is he? Ian Baird, the recently retired captain of Brighton, tells an enlightening anecdote from an FA Cup tie against Watford at Vicarage Road. "Howard wasn't too happy at half-time and came in ranting and raving," Baird recalled. "He picked up a teapot and slung it at the wall but, unfortunately, it rebounded back and the tea went all over his face. He was writing on the floor in agony." Must have been strong tea.

### Dancing Dell boys

The Dell, Southampton, is much the same as most football grounds before kick-off, with street-sellers hawking everything from dodgyburgers to programmes, from fashions to T-shirts. Before the match against Leicester City, many Saints supporters were made an offer with a difference when they were handed leaflets advertising the delights of the Silhouette nightclub in the city. Closer inspection revealed its speciality to be topos table-dancing.

## McLean seeking to draw Rangers' sting

By Kevin McCarron

FEW visiting teams approach Ibrox in a mood of optimism. However, having beaten Rangers once in the Bell's Scottish League premier division and once in the Coca-Cola Cup already this season, Dundee United may view the game today against the champions with equanimity. Over the past few weeks, it has been the rest of the clubs that have left them in the doldrums. United were the rising force in the premier division until they met Celtic twice in the space of eight days last month. The league game was lost 4-0 and, in the Coca-Cola Cup final, Tommy McLean's team were beaten 3-0.

In the three matches that followed, United also failed to score, let alone win. The sequence was broken only last Saturday, when they recorded a 2-1 victory over a St Johnstone team that had been reduced to ten men. It hardly constituted a resurgence, nor would it pass for the harbinger of a happy afternoon at Ibrox. United, all the same, are better than most at assimilating their disappointments and drawing shrewd conclusions. When they first met Rangers this season, Marco Negri scored five times and United lost 5-1. It is hard to think of another club that could so successfully revamp themselves and beat the champions in their next two meetings, rationing Negri to a single goal over that pair of games.

If Maurice Malpas remains his present self in defence and if, beside him, Steven Pressley recovers the form that vanished in the two heavy beatings by Celtic, then United could concoct a tense match with Rangers. Even so, the visitors' fortune should prove insufficient today. There was an intimidating potency about Rangers' 5-2 mauling of Hearts of Midlothian last weekend. Walter Smith's team have been peculiarly inconsistent this season, but there was such an abundance of fine play in the trouncing of Hearts that some of it must surely slip over into the weeks ahead. Celtic, with the sturdiness that has seen them keep a clean sheet in their past six matches, look equipped to maintain a gruelling struggle and they are only one point behind Rangers in the league. Today, they travel to face St Johnstone and may be able to field Marc Rieper, the centre half who is now back in full training after a calf strain. Hearts, the third-placed team who take on Dunfermline at East End Park today, trail Celtic by a single point but the Edinburgh club will find it exceedingly hard to persuade the public that they are not, in reality, lagging far behind the Old Firm. No matter what the league table might say, a credibility gap has opened up after defeats by Celtic and Rangers in their past two fixtures.

## THE TIMES National Bridge Challenge

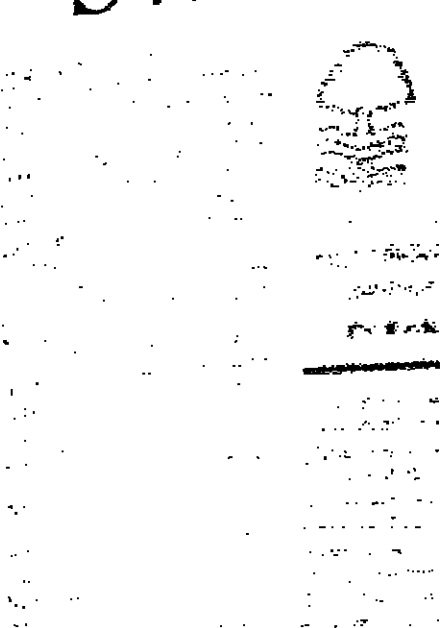
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- MIXED:** P. Wright & S. Rolles, J. Booty & A. Knott, J. Stocken & J. Milliken, B. Raven & H. Ashar, K. Lee & A. Bradshaw, N. Paul & R. Jaffer, M. Sitaram & D. Cutler, K. Stedman & A. Harvey, A. Cockerill & S. Cockerill, R. Masall & N. Denny, R. Connell & J. Connell, M. Cooper & W. Cooper, J. Finlay & J. Skinner, J. Newton & D. Newton, B. Fernandes & J. Evans, H. Rogers & M. Bogue, A. Kong & A. Milne, P. White & S. Moazed, H. Arno & D. de Almeida, S. Stocken & E. Hyde, P. Shaw & D. Body.
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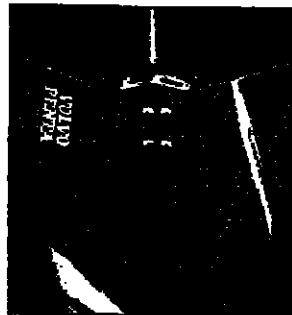
The rush hour is always with us

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Cinderella takes to four wheels

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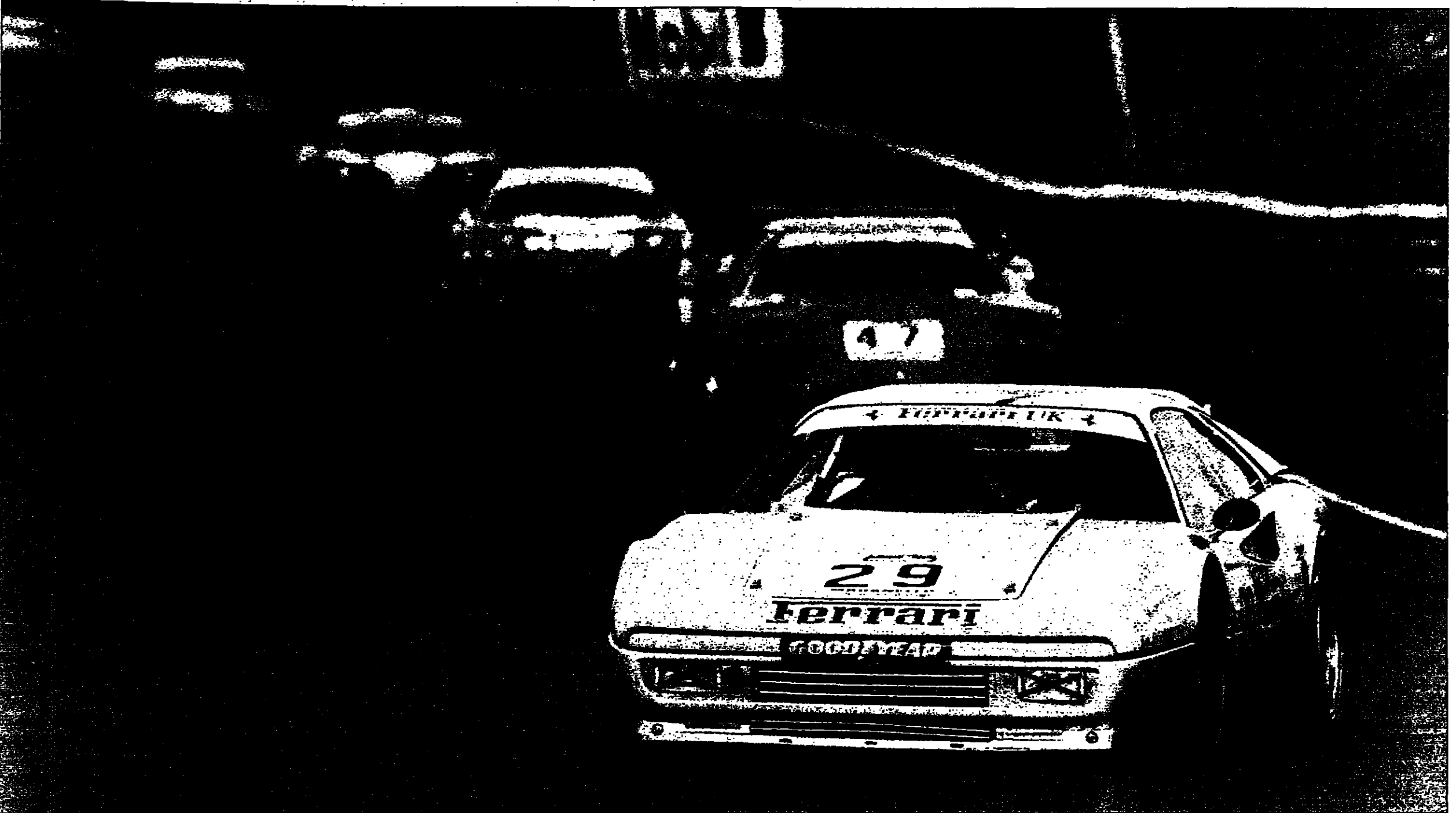
Racing a boat fit for Bond

Next week

go

SATURDAY DECEMBER 27 1997

# A winner made from spare parts



Paul Ciardiello leads the field in one of the Maranello Ferrari Challenge races: "I think you have to be part of the car. It's all very well tuning the car and the suspension, but unless you are in tune with it yourself, there's no point"

For the Teletubbies at the Spice Girls. We talking serious Christmas "number ones". And keen drivers of a certain kind, there's one wish that gets more letters to Santa Claus than anything else: All I want for Christmas is a Ferrari.

But if you read Go two weeks ago you'll know that not even Alan's Genie could deliver such a gift. If you want a new Ferrari in this country the waitlist is at least two years, even you have got the £95,000 required to foot the bill.

Of course you could buy a second-hand one, but then if you resellant a Ferrari for your garage and can afford it, you'll get it to meet your exact requirements.

A two-year wait just wasn't good enough for Paul Ciardiello. A car with the prancing horse badge had been on Christmas list for two decades. So when the Genie said "Oh, no you can't", he was ready with an "Oh yes he can."

What did he want to build a Ferrari from spare parts. Now in his put together by himself, used around the bent chassis of a crash-damaged Ferrari 360, Ciardiello has defied the odds and built all corners by winning his year's Maranello Ferrari Challenge race series.

His extraordinary 328GTB has also been voted Best Prepared car in the 12-race series, a accolade that puts it on a par with any factory produced model. Only its startling yellow colour marks it out from the traditional red competition.

This year's awards come on top of Ciardiello's success last year when his first competitive season's efforts with the car won him the Ferrari Driver of Year title.

His taste is far more than a D racer. It is the culmination of a life-long-motoring dream that started when, as a schoolboy, he bought his first car, a Ford Anglia, in 1915. Three years later, a crash from part-time jobs, was back in the market, and bought an S-Type Jaguar for £600.

But it is a Ferrari on which he has his sights and nothing else would do. Somehow he got from Maranello to the car he now drives like no

**Paul Ciardiello dreamt of having a Ferrari — so he built one for himself. Vaughan Freeman reports**

other marque, the tifosi are in evidence at every grand prix, and, regardless of where they come from, their passion is extreme.

Paul Ciardiello had been touched by the magic that has kept one badge — and only one badge — in the top flight of racing since 1947. No fairy tale could be more appropriate than his in the year that the cars that bear the prancing horse badge notched up 50 years.

"I used to be one of those kids that stood on the side of the road with my mouth open whenever I saw a Ferrari go by," he says. "I have spent 25 years building my business up so that I could afford to go motor racing, and the success of the business has allowed me to be able to race a Ferrari, even if it is rather late in life."

On his way to the coveted titles this season, Ciardiello and his 328GTB also notched up five class lap records at tracks including Donington, Silverstone, and the one he most cherishes, the Formula One Spa Francorchamps track.

The aptly nicknamed "Yellow Peril" Ferrari started life as a crash victim, not surprisingly since the business Ciardiello had worked so hard building up was Maidenhead-based Accident Repair Technicians, which specialises in repairing damaged cars. He saw the potential of the Ferrari wreckage, salvaged the chassis and began to work on straightening it out.

Years of Ferrari mania, and a career in motor engineering, had resulted in Ciardiello building his own private collection of spare parts. These were recruited to start creating the car and uprate the basic Ferrari engine and chassis with modified cylinder heads and camshafts, an exhaust system designed by a friend in Formula One, and an own-

design petrol tank. Determined to save weight, he then began creating his own glass-fibre body, using a 328 body mould. Hand-crafted aluminium body parts were added, ensuring all the while that the car conformed completely to race regulations.

His Ferrari diet was so successful that the car is now handicapped, horse-race style, with 140kilos of metal strapped to the bottom during races.

"I knew we could save only tenths of a second with the engine, but by working on the handling, brakes and suspension, and keeping the car light, we can save much more time," he says.

"We straightened the chassis and put a rollcage on it, and have spent a lot of time on how it handles and making the brakes and tyres work. It has cost a hell of a lot of man hours."

Now the years he spent building up his business are beginning to pay off. He owns five Ferraris, including a new 355 Spider and a brace of 328GTs. "Perhaps it's because my parents were Italian," he says.

The ultimate thrill came at the Belgian Spa circuit: "It was great to pass the chequered flag at Spa. I had never been there before, and that was the most gratifying win, as well as taking the lap record, and not by a few tenths of a second but by a huge amount."

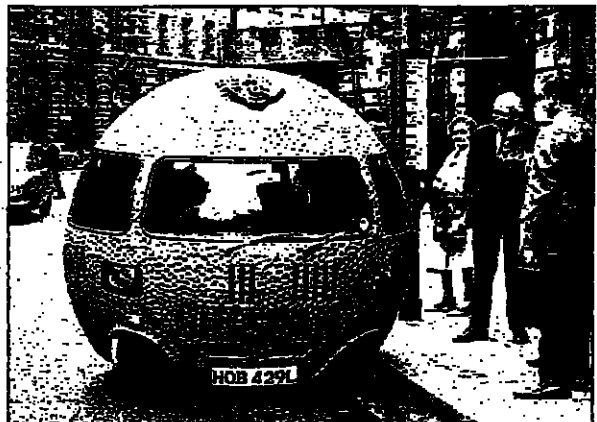
Having a good car is one thing. But rivals have been impressed by the way Ciardiello, who only started racing last year, has been able to beat competitors such as 500bhp F40s, with his 320bhp car, and drivers with far more experience than his two seasons.

He says: "I cannot explain how I drive. I just get in and go. I think you have to be part of the car when you drive. You have to feel one with the machine, the two of you working together. It's all very well tuning the car and the suspension, but unless you are in tune with it yourself, there's no point."

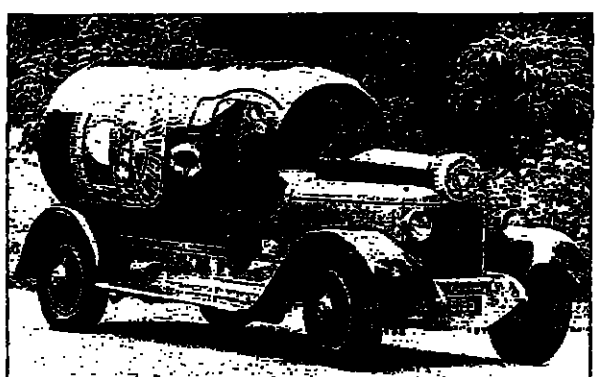
But after 25 years of hard working and longing, perhaps it's no surprise that Ciardiello is so in tune with the Ferrari that happens to come from Maranello — rather than Maranello.

## Real cars that looked just like toys

What could go in a Beaulieu Christmas stocking? Lord Montagu considers some novel possibilities



Outspan Orange: an alarming tendency to roll over



Daimler Bottle: its radiator echoed a crown stopper



Maxx Peel: better in a museum than on the road

Some cars are classics, some become legends, others are disasters... and some are novelties. And from the odder items in the Beaulieu collection, we could provide fillers for the larger size of Christmas stockings, starting with a bottle of beer.

The 1924 Daimler Bottle at Beaulieu is a rare survivor of a fleet that promoted Bass & Worthington Breweries in the days when enterprising companies had special advertising vans built in the shape of their products.

Beaulieu's Bottle entered the collection in 1958 after promoting Worthington White Shield pale ale for more than three decades. The idea originated before the First World War, when the manager of Worthington, a Dutchman, had a round-radiated Spyker car (Holland's leading marque) turned into a bottle van. But Spyker abandoned the circular radiator after the Armistice, so when the brewers needed more bottle vans, a new source of chassis was sought. Daimlers were chosen because the traditional fluting on the radiator echoed the shape of the crown stopper on the bottle's neck.

The Daimler has a Bedford truck engine, fitted after the Second World War to replace the original sleeve-valve power unit. Though this displaces only three litres against the five of the Daimler sleeve-valve, it produces more than adequate power to propel the not insubstantial weight of the sheet-iron bottle bodywork along. But it is hard work, steering is heavy and lacks even the empirical "servo-assist" of a lead-filled steering wheel rim used on some Daimlers in those pre-power steering days.

The four-speed gearbox is filled with heavy-grade oil that takes a long time to warm up and it is difficult to engage the unsynchronised gears without embarrassing

crunching sounds. Idiosyncratic features include a push-on handbrake working on a transmission drum and a central throttle pedal that looks like an aluminium girder and disappears into a slot on the floor when you tread on it.

Next out of the stocking was the Outspan Orange, one of six built in the 1970s to promote the South African fruit producers. It uses the powertrain of a 998cc Mini with automatic transmission in a spaceframe chassis with a wheelbase of only 4ft — the same as its track — over which is fitted the spherical glass-fibre body, fitted with orange-tinted windows and trimmed inside with segmented orange leather.

Like the biblical Holy City, its length, breadth and height are approximately equal at 7ft 6ins, which, coupled to that ultrashort wheelbase, makes for somewhat unsettling handling characteristics. I am told there are 200lbs of ballast built into the rear of the chassis to prevent the orange from rolling forward under hard braking.

When we were given the Orange in 1981 we were told it had been tested on London Transport's double-decker tilting rig and remained stable up to the rig's 39 degree limit. That, of course, was a static test: under power it feels alarmingly unstable, and I take with a very large pinch of salt the claim of another Orange owner that he has driven at a steady 70mph on a motorway.

The entrance is at the rear, the driver sits centrally, right foot horizontally forward down a tunnel beneath the dashboard with the throttle and brake pedals at its far end, while his left foot rests on the floor, poised to make a quick exit if the Orange starts to roll over...

And after the Orange... a little Peel. The Peel three-

wheeler, apart from being the only make of car to come from the Isle of Man, is almost certainly the smallest ever marketed, only 4ft 5ins long, 3ft 5ins wide and 3ft 10ins high, and weighs just 130lbs, making it lighter than most drivers. It has only one seat — which looks suspiciously like a cut-down tubular office chair — and no reverse gear. Instead, a handle on the rear allows the driver to lift the tail and wheel it into the tiniest of parking spaces.

The bodywork is a glass fibre moulding, finished inside in that utilitarian grey spatter-finish paint normally reserved for the grimmer kind of public buildings, and a bulge down the right of the cabin conceals the 49cc DKW two-stroke engine, which is started by sharply pulling up a lever on the floor.

Not only is there no sound insulation, but a hole in the engine cowling allows the choke lever to poke through, so the high-pitched rasp of the power unit is always evident. A crude quadrant of the steering column support bracket is vaguely linked to the three-speed transmission, but you need lots of throttle and clutch slip to overcome the engine's minimal power output when moving away from the rest.

Its makers claimed the Peel had been "tested rigorously over the Isle of Man TT course... [and] the handling is comparable to a normal car", but that is surely wishful thinking. The little red runabout has tiny kart wheels with knobby tyres and feels decidedly unstable long before you reach its top speed of around 35mph.

It only cost £199 new, was cheap to run and bridged the gap between moped and bubble car, but I can't help thinking it is far better off in a museum than it ever was on the road.

















## Michael Clark on the state of the markets in 1997



Malaysia's Dr Mahathir: "traitors"



South Korea's Kim Dae Jung: "flabbergasted" at state of economy



Jarvis's Paris Moayedil: boom year



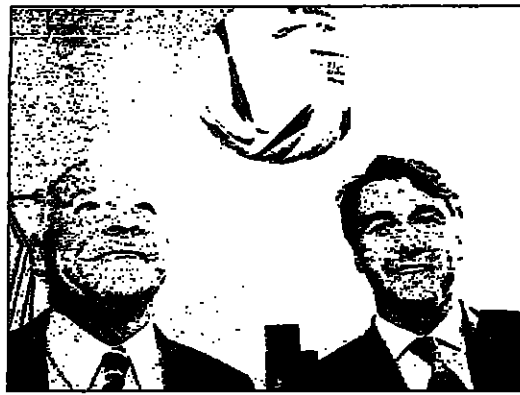
Sears' Sir Bob Reid: 44 per cent fall



George Soros: finger of suspicion



NatWest's Lord Alexander: failed merger talks



JJB Sport's David Whelan, left, and Duncan Sharpe



Laura Ashley's shares were a notable casualty

# Year of the tiger shoot but nerves hold firm in London

It started off as a slanging match between Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and the crown prince of speculators, George Soros, and almost ended in global economic meltdown.

In any event, it meant a rocky end to the year for investors around the globe and the prospect of an uncertain start to 1998.

Mr Soros had highlighted the underlying problems of a number of the Tiger economies. Over a period of months he sold short various currencies, which went largely unnoticed in the West.

It was only when Dr Mahathir made his now famous attack on the likes of Mr Soros — claiming that speculators were traitors and should be hung — that the true extent of the problem began to emerge. But by then it was too late. The cracks had begun to appear in Hong Kong just a few months after the former British colony had been handed over to the nationalist Chinese Government. The writing was also on the wall for the other big players in the Asian theatre.

Japan was next. The inherent problems of the Japanese banking system had been chronicled for some time. Most banks were over-stretched, a large number of loans were dubious and a web of racketeering ran throughout the entire system. It was only a matter of time before things soured.

In the event, it was the

## A row between Mahathir Mohamad and George Soros laid bare fatal weaknesses in Asian economies but fears of global meltdown failed to materialise

collapse of Yamaichi, one of Japan's biggest broking houses, that proved to be the catalyst. Not even the public tears and apologies of Shohhei Nozawa, president of Yamaichi, could prevent the firm going under.

The domino effect continued. Now it was the turn of the booming economy of South Korea where the fallout was to be the most destructive. The currency halved in value against the US dollar in just a couple of months while the government thrashed out a \$55 billion rescue package with the International Monetary Fund. Even the President-elect, Kim Dae Jung, said that he was "flabbergasted" by the state of the Korean economy.

For most of the fourth quarter London held its breath, fearing the Korean debacle would trigger the end to the bull market that had lifted UK shares to record highs. Instead, investors held their nerve and have been rewarded by some of the best overall returns to date.

Leading shares certainly performed much better than analysts had forecast at the start of 1997, with the FTSE 100 index up 22 per cent on the year so far.

It had been feared the election of a Labour Govern-

ment in May would spell disaster for the City. In fact, little separated Labour policies from those of the Conservatives and business was largely unmoved by the change of government.

That was good news for shareholders and there was a great deal more of them by the middle of the year than at the start. The demutualisations that took place throughout the year, including the Woolwich, Halifax, Northern Rock and Norwich Union, created 18 million new shareholders, providing windfalls of £30 billion.

The economic backdrop also proved favourable to investors throughout 1997, with inflation dropping to its lowest level and corporate earnings growing steadily. The stock market shrugged off the ill-effects of five straight interest rate rises by the newly independent Bank of England.

One of the strongest performers was the financial sector, already boosted by those windfalls. As the year wore on it became obvious that the financial services industry would undergo a period of consolidation. NatWest was involved in merger talks, albeit unsuccessfully, with Barclays, Abbey National and the Prudential. The continuing speculation

should again underpin the sector in the new year.

London's best-performing share of 1997 was Abacus Recruitment, the City-based recruitment specialist, whose shares traded on the Alternative Investment Market.

The shares climbed a staggering 177 per cent during the year, to 233p. That compares with the 16p at which they were floated in September 1995. The company has benefited from heavy recruitment in the financial sector, particularly of information technology specialists, and a general decline in unemployment levels and the tighter labour market. The shares moved to a full listing next month.

Jarvis, the construction group whose chief executive is Paris Moayedil, came a close second with a leap of 165 per cent, to 376p. It has not looked back since buying the Northern Infrastructure Maintenance business for British Rail last year. Earlier this year it bought Fastline for £50 million and enjoyed an early Christmas present when it was awarded building and management contracts totalling £670 million.

Surprisingly, a retailer captured third spot with JJB Sports soaring 147 per cent to 647p. The sportswear retailer,

founded by David Whelan, the former Blackburn Rovers footballer, has made the most of the fashion for football club replica shirts. The qualification by England and Scotland for next year's football World Cup finals in France should give JJB a further lift in 1998.

A number of blue chip companies did well in 1997. Nycomed Amersham ended on a firm note, climbing 92 per cent to £22.53 after the merger of Amersham International and the Norwegian diagnostics company, Haskind Nycomed, to become a constituent of the FTSE 250. Vodafone rose 81 per cent to 450p, driven by bid speculation.

There were also some spectacularly grim performances. The biggest faller was BKG Resources, traded on AIM, which tumbled from a peak of 237p to 11p. Other notable casualties include Laura Ashley, down 79 per cent at 36p, after touching a peak of 167p. Growing losses led to the departure of Ann Iverson, its American chief executive. Other retailers who suffered were Sears, whose chairman is Sir Bob Reid, down 44 per cent at 50p, and MFI Furniture, down 40 per cent at 12p.

A profit warning took its toll on Frederick Cooper, down 78 per cent at 9p, while Azian fell 74 per cent to 50p after returning from suspension amid allegations of accounting irregularities.

Aromascan also finished 70 per cent down at 25p on news of increased losses.

## TEMPUS

### Royal & Sun offers bright patch in mixed forecast

Who would have guessed 12 months ago that the FTSE 100 index would soar above 5,000? Then, certain leading fund managers were predicting Armageddon, pointing to a market with a historically high price to earnings ratio and low dividend yield. To those stockpickers who seek value — read inexpensive — investments, the banks and pharmaceutical companies appeared to be heading for a massive correction. But even the recent turmoil in the Far East, which upset HSBC and Standard Chartered, could not hold back the banks which showed gains of 40 per cent over 12 months, while drug companies boasted a similar advance.

Tempus had an unexceptional year, having failed to pick shares in either of these sectors. The portfolio gained modestly in value, up 4.4 per cent with one very poor choice spoiling the performance of some winners. Tempus made some sensible decisions, avoiding the most cyclical industrial sectors, such as chemicals, steel, domestic engineering companies and the packaging industry. The FTSE general industrials index fell 2 per cent during a year in which the All-share index rose 17 per cent.

Tempus was worried about the strength of sterling at the start of the year and the likelihood of interest rate increases, whatever the outcome of the election, worsening the plight of exporters. Hence, its decision to steer clear of much of the capital goods sector. Sadly, the prediction proved accurate: base rates rose a hefty 14 points to 7½ per cent with the new Labour puritans proving intolerant of inflation.

Tempus missed out on the continued strength of the specialised utilities. Water and electricity shares thumbed their nose at the Government's windfall tax, ending the year with gains of almost 40 per cent, adding further lustre to the Footsie. Hopes of further cash handouts in the form of special dividends and share buybacks kept the utilities on the boil.

Best among the Tempus tips was Royal & SunAlliance whose shares gained 32 per cent over the period. Fears that the company would be slow or even fail to achieve cost savings kept the shares back in the first few months. But as the year wore on, it became clear that the merger in 1996 of Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance was more than a meeting of minds in the boardroom. First came news of a 5 per cent share buyback, the first such move from an insurer. That was followed by a good set of interim figures and indications that staff reduction targets were being achieved. Finally, the minds in the boardroom proved able to think the unthinkable by removing the dual leadership of chief executive Richard Gamble and deputy chairman Roger Taylor and replacing them with Bob Mendelsohn, head of Royal Sun's US operations.

Another industry beset by corporate upheaval is telecoms where the largest players in Europe and North America are attempting to use their domestic franchises to achieve international ambitions. Much of the future activity will be led from the largest telecoms market, the United States.

Tempus chose to bet on Cable & Wireless and ignore BT on the grounds that the latter's

venture with MCI was too high risk and would in the end embroil it in a US price war. The prediction about BT's American strategy proved extremely accurate, but what Tempus did not foresee was BT's extraordinary luck in extricating itself from the clutches of MCI with a big profit from the sale of its MCI shares to WorldCom.

Cable & Wireless did reasonably well, gaining more than 9 per cent during the year and proving highly resilient to the Asian stock market gyrations, despite its interest in Hongkong Telecom. Having merged its UK telephony and cable TV operations into a separate vehicle, C&W is now pruning its worldwide portfolio of weak or extraneous businesses. Far from being a potential problem, C&W's core Hong Kong business will be central to the future success of this group.

Tempus chose two consumer oriented shares in the not unreasonable hope that a buoyant UK economy and rapidly falling unemployment would stimulate top-line growth in the shops and in leisure businesses. In addition, the prospect of a £20 billion windfall to holders of building society shares suggested the strong possibility an extra fillip to spending.

The decision to back Rank was unfortunate and demonstrates how a cheap and unloved share is sometimes not a bargain but deservedly cheap. It is also a lesson in how bull markets tend to punish over-capitalised companies with low-growth businesses.

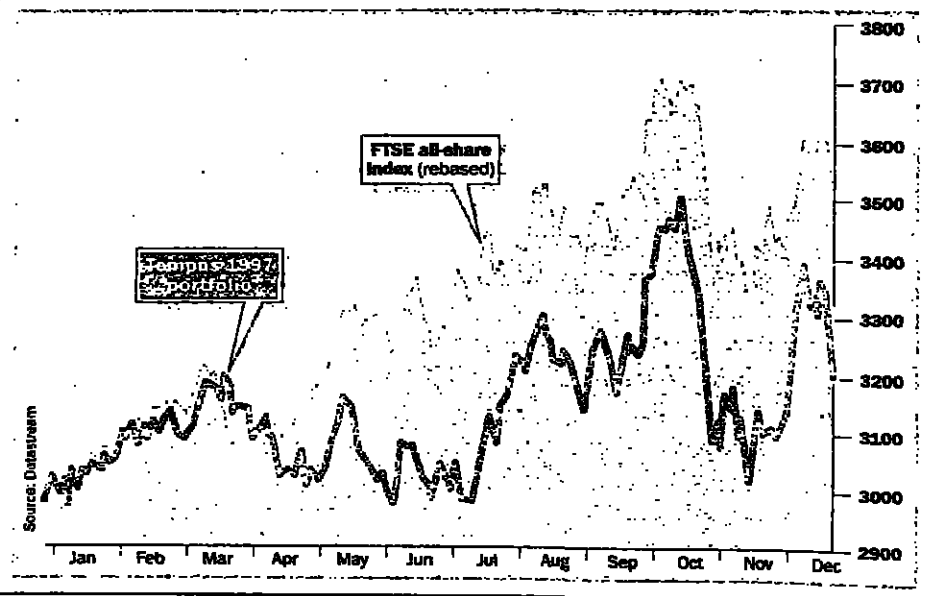
Tempus hoped that the change in management at Rank and the prospect of a cash windfall from the sale of shares in Rank Xerox would revitalise this large but stagnating leisure group. In the event, it was not to be and the shares lost more than 20 per cent of their value. Rank did not get an exceptional price for Xerox and its core bingo and Butlins operations failed to shine. But most disappointing was the lack of good ideas from the management on how to spend the embarrassment of riches.

Burton has been harshly treated by the stock market after a good run in 1996. Part of the problem has been the succession of interest rate rises and growing suspicion about future sales growth among all but the strongest retailers. Burton's decision to demerge the highly successful Debenhams was sound and should leave Arcadia, the rump of chain stores, looking cheap but it came too late to make a difference.

Fearful of the cyclical capital goods sector, Tempus plumped for the safest engineer on the block, Siebe, which ended the year marginally ahead of where it started despite blockbuster profits growth.

And, finally, Cairn Energy comfortably outpaced its peers in the oil exploration sector with a 19 per cent gain because of its thundering success in Bangladesh. Delays in the award of new licences took the shine off Cairn shares late in the year — as did a sagging oil price. The fortunes of oil explorers look less certain next year but Tempus shall look more closely at that and other issues when it chances its hand next week in six shares for 1998.

CARL MORTISHED



## World class

A STORY being told by Gordon Brown, our laughing Chancellor, which he seems to have picked up at the IMF. God calls three world leaders. President Clinton, Jiang Zemin, President of China, and Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, to a briefing. The world is going to end in three days, he says, now go away and tell your people. President Clinton addresses the nation. "I have some good

news and some bad news. Our faith has been rewarded: God does exist. The bad news is that the world will end in three days."

President Jiang tells a billion Chinese he has some bad news and some very bad news. The bad news: atheistic communism was wrong all along. Even worse: the world will end in three days. Dr Mahathir tells his people he has some good news and some even

better news. The good news: he is one of the three most powerful leaders in the world. The even better news? "In three days' time the Asian financial crisis will be over."

● **POSITIVELY** the last joke at the expense of the chosen name for the merged Guinness and Grand Metropolitan... this year, anyway. Wits now say Diageo, the name the marketing men have foisted on the merger, stands for Don't Imagine Any Great Employment Opportunities. Except that for some reason no one at GrandNet seems to find this terribly funny.

### High interest

IT WAS Christmas Eve and not a soul stirred. Except at the various 24-hour banking services, which reported heavy business during the small hours of Christmas morning, when none save Santa and his elves should have been abroad.

Bank of Scotland's Banking Direct was surprised by the number of calls, including festive wishes from customers based in England for lower interest rates in the new year. Over at First Direct, as midnight struck, someone requested a foreign currency payment. Within the first hour, a Yorkshireman decided to pay his utility bill, while an ex-pat in China queried a standing

order and requested a current balance. But financial transactions weren't the only concern, alas. First Direct is perched precariously on a hill above Leeds, and the high winds were causing some worries.

### Wheel crazy

AS WE all look forward to the January sales, a warning from Hudson, Ohio. Keen to drum up some free publicity, a car dealer at the weekend decided to sell 250 cars at silly prices, some as low as \$5 each. The assumption was that in the cold Midwest weather no one would queue overnight. The day,

alas, dawned unseasonably warm, to illuminate a scene of thousands of waiting bargain-hunters.

The dealer opted for a Darwinian solution. He released them all at the same time to rush to the wheel of their chosen vehicle, first come, first served. The predictable result was fighting and some injuries. The ad man who thought up the idea described the scramble as "exhilarating". The police were less impressed.

### Bitter grounds

THE Seattle Coffee Company does not, as its army of City fans will tell you, sell coffee. It sells "tall, slim mochas", "skinny lattes" and so on — these are lifestyle options, you know. The company prides itself on individuality, often to the point of nausea ("I found my life at Seattle. I found myself at Seattle," it says on the wall of one outlet). Strange, then, that customers at its Covent Garden store find a petition from staff protesting that head office has banned everyone from dyeing their hair or piercing any visible part of their anatomy. Support from customers has come rolling in with comments such as "shocking", "have they no shame?" and even "kill them", which doesn't sound too, er, laid-back. What is worse, the Covent Garden crew are top of the endangered species list with a

shock of purple hair and one eyebrow stud between them.

● **PROBABLY** the best excuse yet from South West Trains, heard over the Tannoy at Winchester station: "We apologise for the late running of this train. This is due to a banana which has fallen between the carriage and the platform."

### Art attack

A FUNNY story reaches me from Price Waterhouse. Yes, really. It

seems PW decided to hold a dinner for retired partners. Much debate about the location — somewhere upmarket, posh and artistic, show them we're not all philistines, you know. Someone settled on the Royal Academy, just the thing. And one or two retired partners had their digestion well and truly ruined, because you cannot get to the dining room without going through the exhibition area. They should perhaps have waited until the new year, because Sensation is due to close tomorrow.

MARTIN WALLER



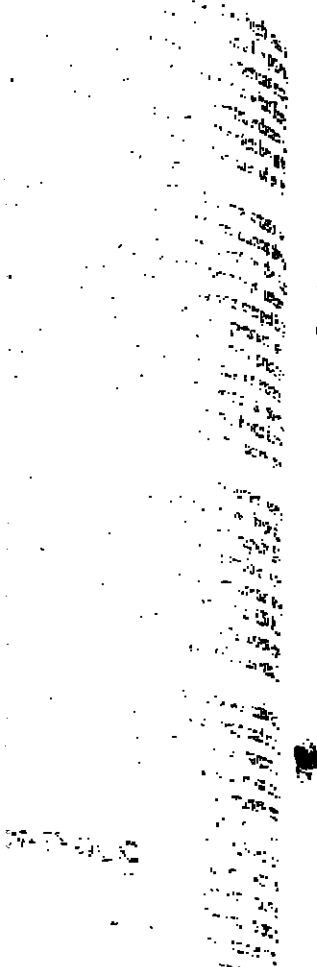
Gordon Brown, our laughing Chancellor, told an unexpected joke



One of the more tasteful works at the Sensation exhibition



**PUS**  
offers bright  
ed forecast



...and the

# ribery



**Goh Chok Tong: controversy**

## Goh Chok Tong: controversy



## 42 UNIT TRUST PRICES

[illegible]





## WONDERFUL LIFE 48

Building society  
Tessas bring  
joy to some

WEEKEND  
MONEY

## HANGING ON 45

Rollercoaster  
markets do a  
loop-the-loop



## Stock surfing for beginners

Thousands of people will have received  
a computer with access to the Internet as  
gifts. Susan Emmett tests financial sites

It has only been two days since you unwrapped that shiny new PC with a 56k modem and surfed your first wave on the *What's new? What's cool?* sites. But by now you may feel it is time to use the Internet for something which is actually useful.

There are thousands of Web pages devoted to investment and personal finance subjects providing an enormous reference library for the small investor. In some cases the information was previously available only to professionals.

But since the Stock Exchange relaxed its rules in June, the number of Websites offering prices has mushroomed. As the exchange charges for real-time information, Internet sites with up-to-the-minute valuations come at a cost while those with prices on a 20-minute delay tend to be free.

Many of the sites offering market information also include other personal finance services. But the more established sites are usually of greater use for those seeking information on family finance.

So whether you are looking for a pension or a mortgage, need more information to manage your business or aspire to become a fund manager, here is where to find relevant information at the click of a mouse:

Yahoo!  
<http://finance.yahoo.co.uk>

Yahoo!, one of the first ports of call for Internet beginners, expanded into financial services in October. True to Yahoo! tradition, this site is easy to use and well presented. It dispenses with many of the services offered by the more extensive sites but works well as a starting point and for quick reference. It is also completely free.

The site focuses on publishing prices on all stocks trading on the London Exchange with continuous 20-minute delayed feeds. Users also have access to all stocks trading on the Frankfurt Bourse and the Bourse de Paris with 15 and 30-minute feeds respectively.

Links are available to the US (<http://quote.yahoo.com>) for 15-minute delayed feeds on all trading stocks on the New York, Nasdaq and American Stock Exchange. Other features include news from Reuters and the Press Association, exchange rates, precious metal prices and company profiles.

Moneyworld  
[www.moneyworld.co.uk](http://www.moneyworld.co.uk)

Moneyworld services extend across a much wider range of personal finance products than most sites. As such, it is one of the most useful for those searching for information on mortgages, savings and pension funds. It also has more than 3,000 London Stock Exchange prices on a 20-minute delay and information on unit trusts and other funds.

As the first personal finance site, launched in 1995, it is clearly designed and easy to follow. If you are new to the Internet and the world of personal finance, this site would suit you. As well as being well signposted, it also explains the basics of finance and includes a glossary of financial terms. Money-

world has links to other personal finance Websites, with a brief description of each.

A current drawback is a lack of portfolio management featured on many similar sites. But this service will be introduced early in the new year and unlike their competitors it will be free of charge.

Interactive Investor International  
[www.iii.co.uk](http://www.iii.co.uk)

Used by both home investors and independent financial advisers, this site has until now focused on collective investments. But a recent venture with Dialog Corporation, the online information company, will provide the site's 45,000 users with equity prices. From February, III will offer real-time prices from London, New York and Nasdaq.

The new pay-as-you-go service will include access to global news, stock quote graphs, market briefings and stock market reports from Standard & Poor's, for which investors are billed at the end of the month. Articles cost £1 each while company profiles are up to £5.

The current service features information on unit and investment trusts, data on offshore funds, Peps, mortgages and pensions. Users can also create a portfolio of funds they wish to watch.

But as the name suggests, this site is unique for its interactive quality. If professional advice is what you need, this service allows you to e-mail questions to a panel of independent financial advisers. It will also let you know where you can find your nearest IFA. Conversely, if you want to air your views, you can head for the *chatroom* to swap ideas with other investors.

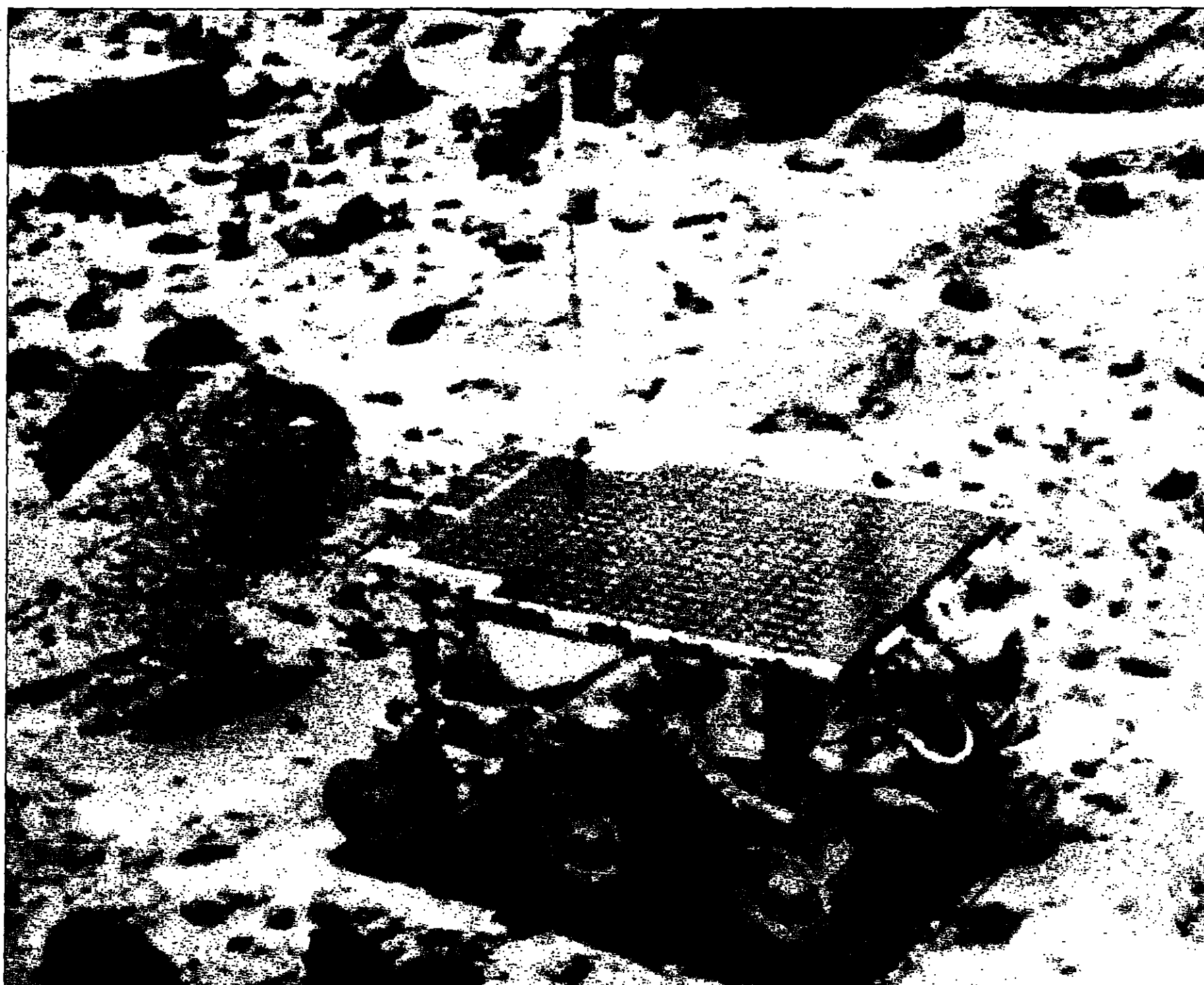
Electronic Share Information  
[www.esi.co.uk](http://www.esi.co.uk)

Another veteran of cyber financial information, ESI is aimed at those with more than a passing interest in stock market investments. ESI has both share and share option prices and unit trust quotes. These are free on a 20-minute delay but real-time information comes at a price. At £20 a month, the Silver service combines unlimited access to real-time prices and portfolio management of ten personal portfolios each containing up to 100 shares.

Additionally, ESI is one of the few to provide a "trading gateway" to execution-only brokers such as Sharelink or Stocktrade. Option dealing can be routed through Union CAL in the same way. But these services are available only to subscribers. There is little in the free service or the £5 a month Bronze service which cannot be found more conveniently packaged and easily accessible on other sites. ESI requires all users to register which can dissuade casual surfers.

Infotrade  
[www.infotrade.co.uk](http://www.infotrade.co.uk)

Used both by private investors and businessmen, Infotrade is long-established and ESI's closest competitor. The site, owned by Mitsubishi Electric, offers a mix of free and subscription-only services. But as one of the few regulated by the



Just as the Sojourner rover made light work of sending back data from Mars, a Website such as Yahoo!, below right, makes picking shares into an easy task for back-bedroom stockbrokers

Securities and Futures Authority, access to any information is only available after trawling through a series of disclaimers which can be off-putting to newcomers. Another barrier is the need to register.

Those who persevere are offered free share prices with a 20-minute delay, mortgage information, an online will-making service and insurance quotes for travel, home and motor cover.

For £14.10 a month, subscribers have access to company reports, portfolio management service for up to 20 portfolios each holding 40 stocks and online share dealing via Sharelink, Caterdeal and Stocktrade. But if you want unlimited access to real-time prices, it will cost £11.75 per month.

Market-Eye Premium  
[www.market-eye.co.uk](http://www.market-eye.co.uk)

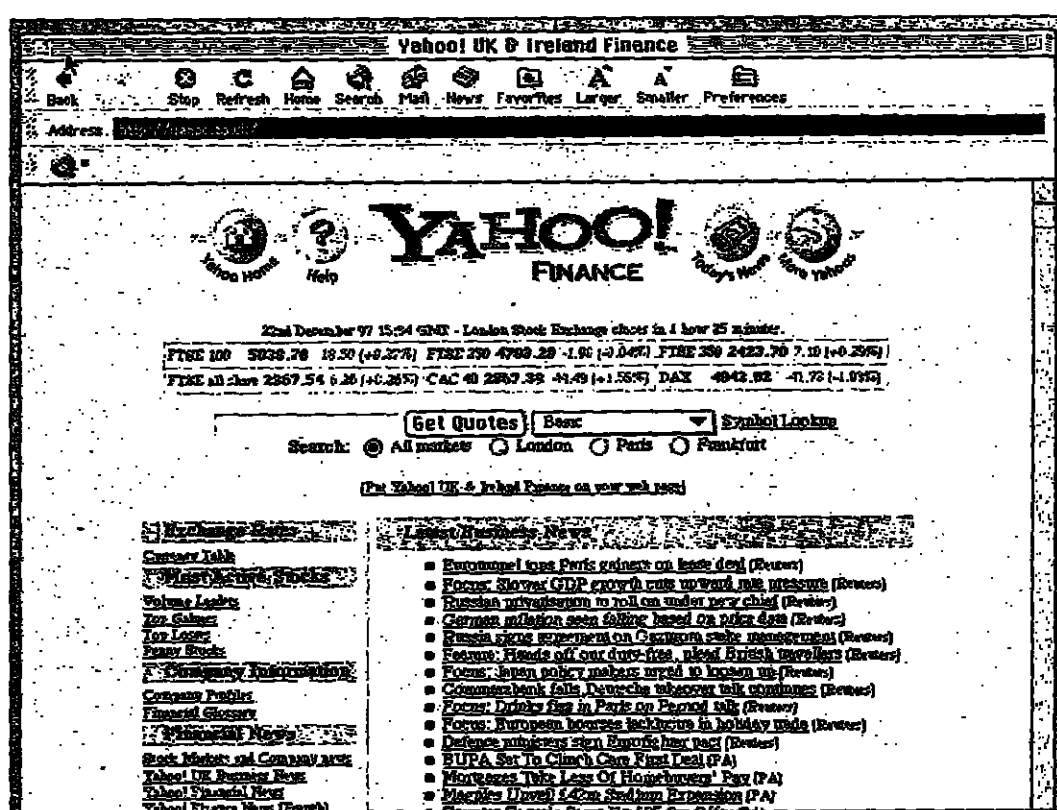
The Market-Eye site certainly stands out from the crowd. Not only is the design slick, it puts the sophisticated home investor on an equal footing with the City big boys by providing access to DataStream

information. The site offers free share quotes for those who register.

But it is the more recent Premium service, launched last month, which fuels the fantasies of back-bedroom stockbrokers. For a fee, users are given real-time prices from the London Stock Exchange and information on London International Financial Futures Exchange (LIFFE), investment trusts, foreign exchanges, the closing prices, graphics and real-time news.

The site is particularly useful for international investors as it lists 32,000 international share prices in up to 60 countries, including all the markets in the European Union. New York, Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore, Hong Kong and São Paulo are among the markets covered.

Other highlights include a portfolio management facility with a daily e-mail valuation service and access to DataStream's vast historical database which has been providing the City with company reports since 1964. The introductory offer of £10 a month goes up to £20 at the end of this year.



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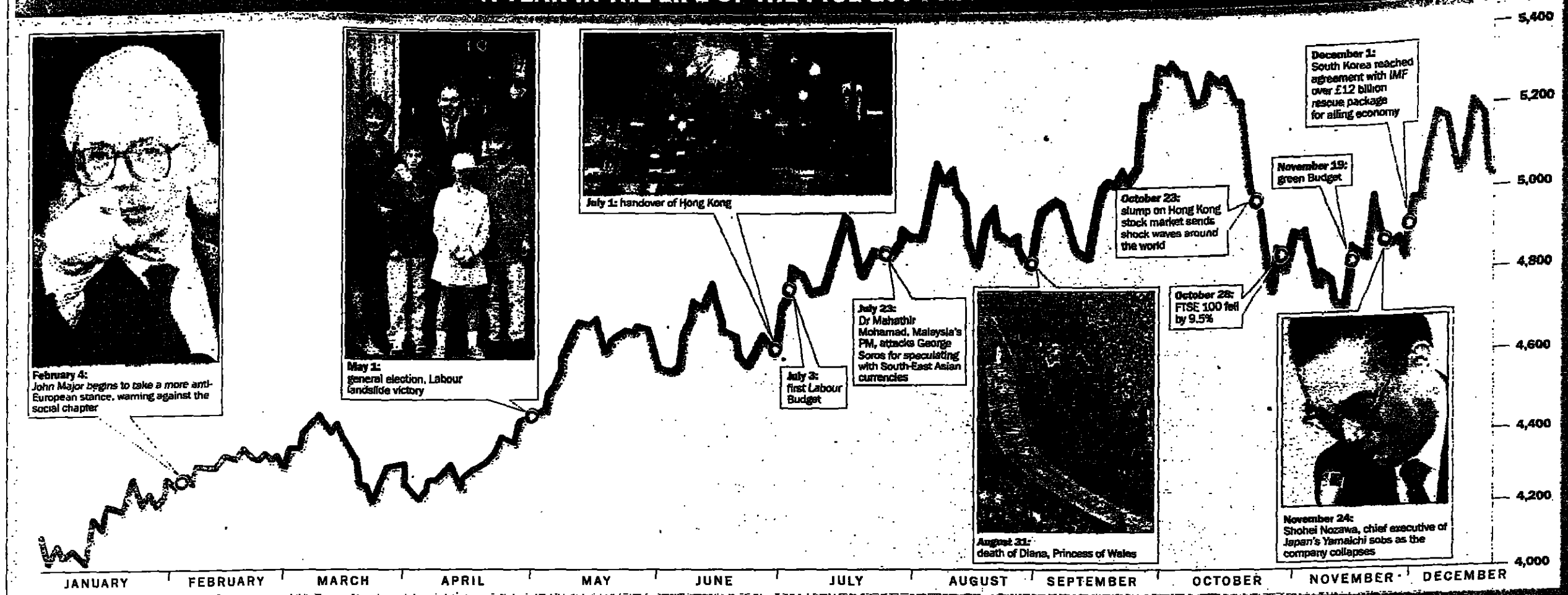
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هذ من لامل

## A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE FTSE 100 PRICE INDEX



## Trackers refuse to be thrown off scent

It will take more than a few stock market wobbles and a meltdown in the Far East to deter investors in index-tracker funds, it would seem. Anecdotal evidence from fund providers suggests that small punters have remained unflinching in the face of the stock market's gyrations since October and have, if anything, increased their investments.

This insouciance certainly looks justified in terms of past performance. The two and three-quarter years since Virgin set the industry alight with publicity lambasting the performance of managed funds has given some perspective to the brash claims of Richard Branson. So far, investors drawn by the promise of ultra-lean charges and performance to boot have seen the reality (largely) live up to the hype.

Index trackers have turned in a sparkling performance against their managed brethren over both one and three years, the periods during which the sector has started to motor. As our table shows, even the average fund tracking the FTSE 100 index has managed a very acceptable 22.5 per cent rise over the past year or so, rising to an extremely handy 68 per cent over three.

That is well ahead of the nearest managed rivals in the UK growth and income sector, the investment universe shared by both trackers and conventional unit trusts. The figures from Standard &

Poor's Micropal show below average growth of 15.5 per cent over one year and slightly less than 56 per cent over three. Add in the fact that only 13 of 145 UK growth and income funds beat the tracker average over one year and only nine of 121 outperformed on a three-year view and one can be forgiven for wondering why any fund manager is still in a job.

The surprise is not so much the absolute performance of index trackers — after all, they have only had to come close to matching a FTSE 100 in robust good health this year to do well. More of a shock is the failure of managed funds to cash in fully on the market's gains, despite the alleged added value provided by their managers.

Investors have certainly not been slow to recognise the difference, pumping a record £1.23 billion into the sector in the ten months to October, compared with £434 million in the whole of 1996. Much of this is money reshuffled out of existing investments, observers say, suggesting that investors are wising up to the advantages of index trackers. But as our table shows, there is a surprising degree of divergence in performance, even within the index-tracking sector. Biggest is not always best.

Despite being one of the smaller providers, River & Mercantile (R&M) is ranked number three among FTSE trackers. Jonathan Harbottle, of R&M, says they aim to keep the fund's diver-

## Managed funds are failing to keep pace with their leaner rivals, says Magnus Grimond

gence from the index to no more than 0.18 per cent over 12 months. Yet the Micropal figures show R&M at least two percentage points adrift on its tracker over one year.

Mr Harbottle points out that straight comparisons with the index being tracked can be misleading. A number of factors, including charges, how closely the fund matches the index, the basis of dealing, how income is treated and the time that prices are taken, all make significant differences to the final valuation.

Charges are clearly crucial, with those groups — notably three of the clearing banks — still charging a management fee underperforming significantly. River & Mercantile, which pioneered index trackers with a unit trust team poached from James Capel in 1995, claims to be the lowest-cost provider for anyone with more than £2,500 to invest. The group levies a 0.5 per cent initial charge to cover stamp duty and 0.35 per cent of the value of the fund every year to cover management costs.

Mr Harbottle says: "We are aiming at professional investors and the more astute private buyers, who see that Garmore, Virgin, HSBC etc are offering good value,

and see that there is even better value at River & Mercantile."

The group's crown as cheapest provider is disputed by Legal & General, whose two UK funds — together totalling £885 million — make it one of the industry's most popular brand names. L&G makes no initial or exit charge and levies 0.5 per cent a year to cover management. Taking account of the fact that River & Mercantile does not offer a personal equity plan, Mike Hady, managing director of L&G's unit trust company, says that L&G's is the cheapest PEP tracker on the market. He questions the size and expertise of a relatively small provider like R&M, which has less than £35 million in its index-tracking fund out of a total of £190 million in unit trusts under management.

"We manage £25 billion and we would argue that scale is the key to running index funds. The bigger the funds, the lower the costs are going to be," he says.

L&G, which aims to track its indices to within 0.5 per cent in two years out of every three, claims sheer volume allows it to absorb many costs that are otherwise piled on to the investor. Both the stamp duty and the costs of "aggressive" marketing are absorbed with the 0.5 per

cent annual fee on the assumption that they will be recovered over time.

"The argument for index tracking is so compelling that the response rate will be higher and we will get higher profits as a result," argues Mr Hady.

Despite charging more than both R&M and L&G, Virgin can already boast the largest single fund, even after less than three years in the index-tracking game. Not a company to hide its light under a bushel, Virgin claims its championing of the index-tracking cause has been the main factor in the product's new-found popularity. David Ramsbottom, marketing manager at Virgin Direct, says Virgin is about "providing a product for the majority of people. It is all about making it simple and straightforward."

The zero initial charge and 1 per cent management charge certainly fits that philosophy. The only niggle is Virgin's annoying £2 fee per investment if you invest less than £1,000 and a 0.5 per cent charge if you hold the fund for less than five years.

But these are nothing compared with the increasingly incongruous initial charges being levied by a few providers. Given that there is no need for expensive fund managers to run tracker funds, there would seem to be no justification for fees that match conventional unit trusts. However, Barclays is charging a chunky 5.25 per cent initial charge for its FTSE

tracker and a further annual fee of 1.25 per cent.

John Kelly of Barclays Funds, the new name for the old Barclays Unicorn unit trust group, is hardly forthcoming with robust defences for these charges. "We don't promote these funds. They are used within funds of funds sold through the branch networks and the fees are rebated within them. They were created to meet the management and distribution expenses."

Even so, there appears to be a contradiction at the heart of the Barclays approach as it wrestles with sorting out its Byzantine unit trust structure. While promoting advisory management for the private investor to justify large fees, it also owns the largest index-tracking group in the world — Barclays Global Investment Managers. With a group of that calibre within the Barclays stable, it seems odd that the bank is not promoting its four tracker funds.

Perhaps the problem is, as Anne McMeahan of the Association of Unit Trust and Investment Funds says, that "people have used trackers as a marginal stepping stone to get out of building societies and into the tropical heat of managed funds."

The launch in 1999 of individual savings accounts, with their requirement for low costs and easy administration, should be a gift to tracker fund providers. But there may still be too many vested interests around really to get them off the ground.

## Thought for the day

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## Avoid rose-tinted speculations

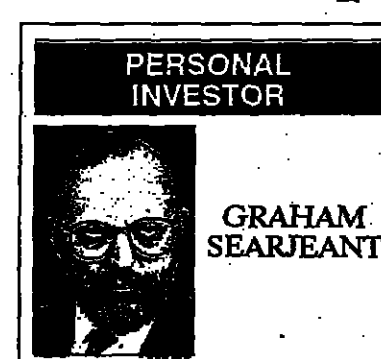
What an odd year. Twelve months ago, stock market analysts found it hard to sound optimistic about 1997 prospects in the world's main stock markets, Tokyo excepted. Share prices had flown further ahead of their long-term trend. Interest rates looked set to rise in Britain and America. Continental Europe was stuck in a fiscal squeeze. Forecasts of profit growth were shrinking.

In the event, London, Wall Street and most continental markets have had a great year, prices rising between a fifth and a third. Instead of Japan finally climbing out of the valley of despair, however, it has been joined there by the rest of East Asia, other than China.

Profits are growing slower on both sides of the Atlantic and UK short-term interest rates have risen strongly. Other factors have driven asset prices further ahead. The most important has been the downturn in long-term interest rates. Most investors reckon inflation will stay modest. So share ratings have pushed headily up, especially in New York.

Over there, thanks to the Federal Reserve, the economy continues to tread a confident path between over and underheating. That gave a solid basis for the rest of the world, until the Asian epidemic spread in autumn. Now America has to keep on the golden road while the third of the world economy relied on to be most dynamic faces a 1930s-style slump. The West must hope that the "tiger" economies will adjust rapidly where even Japan has failed.

The other boost has come from



PERSONAL INVESTOR

GRAHAM SEARJEANT

outperformance by many of the top shares that tend to dominate indices. In part that reflects the global approach of more fund managers. Many of these groups have also gained the benefit of past restructuring or started new rounds of mergers and cost-cutting. Many sprawling giants shrunk their equity base by paying out lumps of cash.

In Britain and continental Europe, international mergers in defence and insurance are booked in advance. The infection will surely spread to other sectors as multinationals prepare for the euro and for global competition.

Having been sensibly cautious and mostly wrong a year ago, securities houses and fund managers are now cheerful about the London market. Most expect the FTSE 100 index to end 1998 between 5 and 20 per cent higher.

On average, however, big investors expect earnings and dividends to grow by about 7 per cent next year as the

economy slows sharply. After a long bull market, you might think it hard to justify share prices rising faster than company earnings next year.

Western markets reacted robustly to Asian market turmoil in the autumn. But the FTSE is still 6 per cent off its October peak of 5,330. Do not presume further short-term growth unless and until it has surpassed that level. Meanwhile, if values turn down, those negative factors that are ignored in good times will figure more heavily in investors' minds.

Back home, economic growth may slow too far. And investors may decide that Labour is more hostile in office than they hoped in the innocence of spring. The windfall tax was shrugged off: the utilities index ends the year in line with the big company average. But monopoly utilities are still in line for when ministers need enemies.

Pep holders are to be doubly hit, by abolition of tax credits and by restrictions on the replacement savings vehicle. That £5 billion a year dividend tax on pension funds will really hurt profits if the stock market turns down and takes surpluses with it. Other tax reviews are due: do not expect favours.

As usual, new year is a time to take stock but not necessarily a good time to take investment decisions. If you want to gamble spare money on Far East markets, good luck. By all means take the plunge. Beyond that, private investors' best new year resolution would be to look after their own common interests better in a newly hostile world.

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## Patrick Collinson looks back at a lively year in the markets



## Hang on tight as we loop-the-loop

Rollercoaster is a word used too frequently to describe investment markets. By the end of 1997, rollercoasters were old hat — stock markets were doing a loop-the-loop.

Most investors should have enjoyed the ride. The total return on investing in UK shares over the past 12 months has been a stunning 22 per cent. Wall Street defied the doomsters with its continued rise, while merger mania helped European bourses to break one record after another. The unlucky investor was in Japan and the Far East, with many emerging markets submerging instead.

What's in store for 1998? The message from the experts is to keep your cash in UK shares. But if you are tempted outside the UK, go no further than Europe. Unwinding the problems in Japan and the Far East will take many more months if not years, while only the bravest are willing to commit money to Wall Street at the level that share prices have now reached.

Property could be the joker in the pack, with many predicting that UK commercial properties, particularly in the South, will outstrip returns from investing in shares.

The investment buzzword for 1998 is "shareholder value". Investors can no longer rely on economic growth to deliver stock market returns — the meltdown in the Korean and Thai markets has put paid to that notion. Instead, the experts are searching out companies and countries where the interests of shareholders — in the form of higher profits, dividends and share buybacks — take precedence over building corporate empires or maintaining market share at any price.

But it is worth remembering how spectacularly wrong the experts can be. For years investment managers have extolled the virtues of the Far East, based on economies growing at 8 per cent to 10 per cent a year. But the carry investors who ignored their calls and bought big US stocks instead would have enjoyed much fatter profits.

Weekend Money asked the experts to gaze into their crystal balls and make predictions for the year ahead.

UNITED KINGDOM: Economists broadly agree that the economy will slow in

1998, especially in the second half of the year, with growth at around 2 per cent to 2.5 per cent, compared with more than 3.5 per cent in 1997. Interest rates are also expected to nudge upwards, although the peak of around 7.5 per cent will be lower than in other periods. Despite this, profits and dividends are expected to grow at around 7 to 8 per cent, providing support for the stock market.

David Rough, Legal & General group director, investments, said: "We expect a FTSE 100 level of 5,500 by the end of 1998, but we also expect to see a bumpy ride up to that level. A rush to 5,500 early in the year would see us taking a defensive position." Big UK companies, particularly financial stocks in the FTSE 100, were the only investment game in town in 1997. Can their rise continue, or should the UK investor be buying smaller company shares?

Keith Wade, chief economist at Schroders, said: "We expect further bid activity in the new year, particularly among medium and smaller-sized companies." Fidelity adds that the mid-size company is its preferred investment in the UK, but admitted that "the market overall cannot be said to be cheap".

But Ken Forman, global strategist at Standard Life, thinks that big companies should continue to surge ahead. He said: "Smaller companies look cheap, but they may continue to look cheap. What is driving world stock markets is the trend towards global players. Big companies are becoming bigger. Banks could have another good year because, if you look at the European banking scene, not one has a large market share."

EUROPE: Second favourite after the UK for most investment managers is continental Europe. Economic growth is picking up, but inflation and interest rates remain low and the outlook for profits growth is good. A

lot of merger activity is also expected before European economic and monetary union, currently on track for January 1999.

Unfortunately, much of the good news is already in the level of European share prices, which rose even more than the FTSE during 1997. Mr Wade said: "Europe remains the safe haven from the problems in Asia. There are a number of favourable developments which should support equity prices, including corporate restructuring."

Mr Forman says that despite recent mergers such as between Swiss banks UBS and SBC, there is still a long way to go. "European companies really are at an early stage of rationalisation. I think the market will rise, but not enough to take the shine off the effect of reorganisation." Legal & General is a little more cautious. Peter Knapton, L&G Securities managing director, said: "The outlook is reasonable, but it won't go up in leaps and bounds. Restructuring will continue, but valuations are quite high."

UNITED STATES: The absence of British investors from the Wall Street boom is the big "mea culpa" of the UK investment industry. James Williams, chairman of Baring Asset Management's strategic policy group, said: "My colleagues in America unkindly suggest that when the British finally change their negative views on the US, the market will peak."

But there are no signs that the experts are capitulating and telling investors to buy US stocks. Fidelity, the biggest investment organisation in the US, and which also has a large presence in the UK, said: "There is no doubt that valuations remain stretched." Mr Forman said: "Investors have got the US wrong for a long time and I admit I came out far too early. But I do wonder if profit margins are going to come under pressure next year, and I

expect underperformance from the market, although not a crash."

ASIA: The crash began in Thailand, spread like wildfire through Malaysia and Indonesia and finally toppled South Korea, the biggest economy in the region after Japan. But a rapid bounce back is not expected.

Richard Urwin, Gartmore's head of macro-economic research, says: "The Asian crisis could yet develop further. Perhaps the greatest risk concerns China, which has to date been relatively unaffected by the turmoil among its neighbours." Schroders is also negative. Mr Wade said: "We feel it is too early at this stage to predict when a broader recovery will begin." However, Mr Forman added: "If currencies stabilise there will be some recovery in confidence. It's a high-risk play, but I wouldn't be advocating going in yet."

JAPAN: When will the eight-year bear market in Japan finally bottom out? This time last year many investment professionals were tipping 1997 as the year of recovery in Japan. In the event, the market has gone from bad to worse, dipping below 15,000 at the year end, compared with 40,000 at the end of 1989.

Mr Forman says the pain could continue for another couple of years. He said: "I suspect it will recover a bit, but I believe it will be in a trading range for a few years. It will be in the long-term interest of the Government to let a number of companies go bankrupt. Rescuing them will not be the solution."

Japan is most affected by the Asian crisis because it sends 7 per cent of its exports to Korea alone. Schroders said: "We remain cautious on the market due to worries over the financial system and a deteriorating economic environment. Corporate earnings are likely to disappoint rather than surprise on the upside and we expect the market to remain volatile."

Mr Knapton said: "It's going to get worse before it gets better. The bad debt problem is enormous. A new low could be established, below 14,500, but at the year end it could be between 16,000 and 18,000, which would be a good recovery if you get your timing right."

## Welcome to the People's New Year

Those for whom shopping is not therapy but torture have every excuse today not to go to the sales. They can, with justification, plead poverty. In the new year, almost everyone will be worse off. Our finances have been attacked by a combination of tax and interest rate rises. The next Budget is likely to contain further blows to the wallet, including possible national insurance increases.

To date, the Government has attempted to introduce its tax rises in a surreptitious fashion, although it has not always been successful in suppressing bad publicity. True to his pledge not to raise income tax rates, Gordon Brown has ensured that the effect of the cuts to various concessions cannot be seen in wage packets. But households will still see their incomes shrink, as they pay out more for pensions and see savings tax breaks cut.

The phasing-out of tax



COMMENT  
ANNE ASHWORTH  
Personal Finance  
Editor

relief on profit-related pay which begins next month is a more overt tax change, clearly visible on pay slips (see page 48). The million-plus employees affected by the reduction, who will each lose an average of £20 a month, will reflect that at least Kenneth Clarke tended to operate in a more upfront fashion than his successor. Meanwhile, Mr Clarke, who announced the ending of this relief in his 1996 Budget, will himself doubtless enjoy the embarrassment to Labour of his tax timebomb.

Most of the 3.7 million workers in profit-related pay

schemes will not be compensated by their employers for the shortfall in their earnings. For those who are homeowners, lower earnings will coincide with more expensive mortgages. The new rate of mortgage tax relief will add £11 to the cost of the average loan. At the same time, the millions of borrowers whose loan rates are adjusted once a year are likely to see their repayments rise by about £50 a month.

In the light of these extra costs, few will have the spare cash to make the extra pension savings made necessary by Mr Brown's abolition of

pension tax credits. This was his most devious move to date. But, as advance corporation tax nimbles brains, few will have understood the implications for their pensions of Mr Brown's tinkering with the rules. Most will not realise that they should have raised their contributions until it is too late.

However, the meaning of Mr Brown's other savings tax measure was far clearer. His plan to replace Peps and Tessa with individual savings accounts (ISAs) could be interpreted in only one way: as a disincentive to save. Fortunately, the public outcry has ensured that the ISA proposals will be remodelled. Those who hold out little hope even for the revised version should take a fresh look at the Tessa. She has grown generous in her final months, with no liposuction of her rates expected.

## Unit and investment trusts tipped for top

How can small investors take advantage of the forecasts for investment markets in 1998? Weekend Money asked Graham Hooper, director at Chase de Vere Investments, one of the biggest investment advisers in the UK, to pick his top unit trusts and investment trusts for 1998.

## UNITED KINGDOM

Schroder UK Enterprise unit trust. Fully Pappable.

"I believe that sterling's strength will continue to affect big companies, which tend to generate a large part of their profits from overseas. Therefore, I'm very keen on the smaller companies which make up most of Schroder UK Enterprise. It's got a very good fund manager, Jim Cox, who is relatively sanguine on UK equities and has a brilliant track record. It's also not expensive to buy."

Perpetual Income unit trust. Fully Pappable.

"I recommend this for an investor who wants income rather than growth. Fifteen months ago a lot of investment advisers began wondering if performance had gone off the boil, but the manager, Neil Woodford, has answered his critics and shoved performance down their throats. I expect it to do well again in 1998."

## EUROPE

Fidelity European unit trust. Fully Pappable.

"EMU is politically almost inevitable, and a single currency will mean lower investment risk and volatility for UK investors. The trust is widely diversified and I like the manager, Anthony Bolton, who is an excellent value investor. At 3.25 per cent it has a relatively cheap initial charge, and Fidelity also offers a phasing option for anyone worried about market levels at the moment."

## UNITED STATES

Henderson American Capital & Income investment trust.

"You can't ignore the US and you should have a toe in it, but you don't want to take on the risk of buying with Wall Street at these levels. One way around it is to buy the capital shares of this trust, which had a wind-up date of February 28, 1999. It has only 15 months more life and it is well covered. The way the trust winding-up will work, even if the US stock market contracts by 2.5 per cent per annum, it will still give investors 18.9 per cent. If the market stays at these levels, it will give 22.7 per cent."

## JAPAN

No selection.

"I am a pessimist on Japan, and if we saw

12,000 on the Nikkei I wouldn't be surprised. The Government still has not addressed the structural problems in the financial sector, and there are more problems on the horizon. Investors ought not to be too exposed to Japan. If you still want a Japanese investment, I would take Perpetual's Japan trust managed by Scott McGlashan, who approaches the market with a pessimistic view."

## FAR EAST

HSBC Hong Kong Growth.

"I am still very worried about South-East Asia and Korea, and I still think there are things to come out of the woodwork. I normally prefer to recommend regional trusts with a spread of countries, but not this time. Currently I prefer HSBC Hong Kong, but if you do want a spread, then Schroder Far East has got about the best selection of investments."

## BALANCED

Fidelity Triple Performance. Fully Pappable.

"For a diversified Pep which has the advantages of putting your investments across many different regions, I am currently recommending Fidelity's Pep, which has half in the UK, 25 per cent in Europe and 25 per cent in the Far East."

PATRICK COLLINSON

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Guaranteed	1.00%	42.33%
Variable	1.00%	41.35%
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## Some festive cheer for housebuyers

Christmas may not be the obvious time to go househunting. But now could be your best chance of actually finding somewhere you want to buy - especially if you live in London or the South East.

For most of this year, would-be buyers have been thwarted by a serious shortage of good property. Any desirable home in a good area was snapped up immediately. Greedy sellers and unscrupulous estate agents took advantage of intense competition to gouge existing buyers and accept higher offers from others.

Demand pushed up prices, in turn tempting many potential sellers to hold back and wait for further rises. London saw rises of up to 40 per cent in some areas during 1997.

But now supplies of properties and numbers of people wanting to buy them are swinging back into equilibrium. Buyers, particularly in expensive parts of the country, are starting to jib at high prices as mortgage costs rise. Sellers are realising that house price rises will almost certainly slow next year. Housing analysts are predicting a rise of around 5 per cent in house prices next year.

compared with up to 12 per cent in 1997.

Hilary Wade, of Winkworths, the London estate agent, says: "Availability is up and we expect it to improve. Next year should be steady and buyers should start looking now."

The sooner they start, the more likely they are to beat off rivals armed with fat bonuses from a good year in the City. According to Ms Wade, some are already looking, and not just in the million-pound bracket. "They're looking at a whole range of things. They're looking in Fulham, Notting Hill, Islington, Battersea, Wandsworth."

Buyers outside London and the South East may have more of a problem finding what they want, however. Ian Perry, of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, says there is still a shortage of good property in sought-after areas. "All through the year there has been a supply problem. It has improved but there's still a problem, except in the South East. Elsewhere, there are lots of people looking but they can't find anything they want."

See page 39 for Halifax house price predictions.

SARA MCCONNELL

## GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

### ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at June 19, 1997

Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.45
5,000	AIG Life	6.26
10,000	GE Fin Ass	6.75
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
2 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.00
3,000	ITT Lond & Ed	6.10
5,000	AIG Life	6.17
10,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
3 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.75
3,000	ITT Lond & Ed	6.30
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.45
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.55
4 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.80
3,000	ITT Lond & Ed	6.15
5 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.86
10,000	Hambro Assured	6.30

Source: Chamberlain de Broit 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS				
Woolwich 0800 222200	Card Saver	Instant	£50	7.00 Yly
C & G 0800 742437	Inst Transfer	Inst(B)	£1,000	7.25 Yly
Legal & General Bank 0800 111200	Direct Access	Postal	£2,500	7.15 Yly
Alliance & Leicester BS 0845 6088860	First Cls Inst	Postal	£10,000	7.50 Yly

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS				
Bristol & West 0800 222121	Postal 90	90 day p	£10,000	7.80 Yly
Northern Rock 0800 505000	Select 90	90 day p	£10,000	7.80 Yly
West Bromwich BS 0900 143668	Direct 90	90 day p	£25,000	8.00 Yly
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650	Base Plus	1 year	£2,001	8.00 Yly

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)				
Mellor Mowbray BS 0800 731 7355	5 year	£1,000	7.90 Yly	
Sun Bank Group 01438 744505	90 day p	£3,000	7.85 Yly	
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650	Premier+feeder	5 year	£9,000	7.85 Yly
Mansfield BS 01246 202055 2	5 year	£500	7.75 Yly	

Card type	Interest per month	APR	Fee per annum	
CREDIT CARDS				
Capital One Bank 0800 689000	Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%NC	Nil
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%NC	Nil
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829100	Mastercard/Visa	1.00%	14.00%NC	Nil

PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs	with insurance	no insurance
Direct Line 0181 680 9966	12.80%K	£183.75	£168.38	
Capital One Direct 0800 216252	12.90%K	£189.48	£166.54	
BoS (Banking Direct) 0800 805805	12.90%K	£191.55	£166.60	

NS: A = Minimum age 25 years; B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System; C = no interest free period; N = introductory rate for a limited period; CM = interest paid on maturity; = By Post Only

\* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: Moneyfacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01692 500 677)

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
PERSONAL LOANS				
Capital One Bank 0800 689000	Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%NC	Nil
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%NC	Nil
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829100	Mastercard/Visa	1.00%	14.00%NC	Nil

NS: A = Minimum age 25 years; B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System; C = no interest free period; N = introductory rate for a limited period; CM = interest paid on maturity; = By Post Only

\* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: Moneyfacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01692 500 677)

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
PIBS				
FIXED RATE				
Birmingham Midshires 9.375%	123.50	7.50	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley 11.625%	153.25	7.50	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley 13.000%	171.25	7.50	100.20	10,000
Britannia 13.000%	170.75	7.80	100.42	1,000
Coventry 12.125%	158.50	7.80	100.75	1,000
First National 11.750%	154.00	7.80	100.25	10,000
Leeds & Holbeck 13.375%	180.00	7.40	100.23	1,000
Newcastle 10.750%	144.25	7.40	100.32	1,000
Newcastle 12.625%	168.50	7.40	100.45	1,000
Stilton 12.875%	174.00	7.40	100.48	1,000

PERPETUAL SUBORDINATED BONDS

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Chelt & Gloucester 11.750%	159.75	7.30	100.98	50,000
Halifax 8.750%	116.50	7.50	100.82	50,000
Halifax 12.000%	152.50	7.80	100.28	50,000
Halifax 13.630%	186.00	7.30	100.00	50,000
Bristol & West 13.380%	175.50	7.60	100.34	1,000
Northern Rock 12.625%	166.25	7.50	100.14	1,000

PIBS=Permanent interest-bearing shares. Source: NetWest Markets

SHARE IN FOCUS: SOUTH HOLDINGS

NEW DRUGS FAIL TO GET APPROVAL

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

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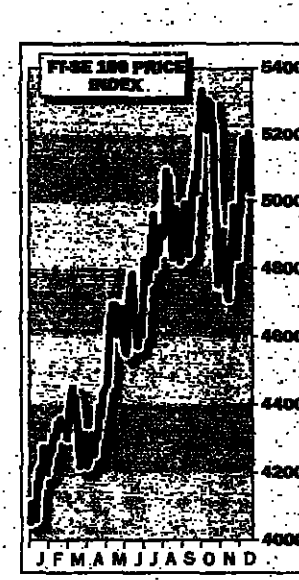
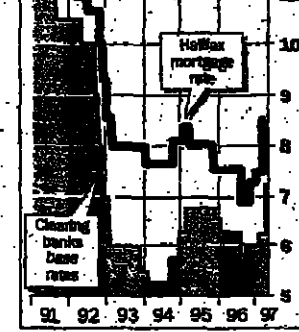
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Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
5.39	£20k-150k	80	Fixed to 1.2.20
5.75	to £300k	90	2.35% discount for 2 years
5.74	No min	80	Fixed for 2 years
0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed 6 months
3.98	to £250k	75	3% disc 6 mths

Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
0.98	£15-150k	95	7.45% disc 6 mths
0.75	£25-150k	75	Fixed to 0.75% to 31.1.98
1.20	to £180k	95	7% disc - 6 mths
0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed 6 mths
3.98	to £250k	75	3% disc 6 mths

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0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed 6 mths
3.98	to £250k	75	3% disc 6 mths

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
ORDINARY A/C				
Investment A/C				
Income Bond				
First Cls Bond				
4th Issue Bonds				
Children's Bonds				
Gen Est Rate				
Capital Bonds				
11th Ind Linkeds				
Pennine Bond 97				

1st £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 2nd £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 3rd £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 4th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 5th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 6th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 7th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 8th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 9th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 10th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 11th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 12th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10% for up to £100 (£200) and 20% for over £100 (£200). 13th £70 (£140) of net tax free, then 10









## TAKING STOCK 44

Graham Searjeant  
on an odd year  
in the market

# WEEKEND MONEY

## HOLIDAY BLUES 47

Easing the cost  
of Christmas  
break-ups



## Not so prosperous new year

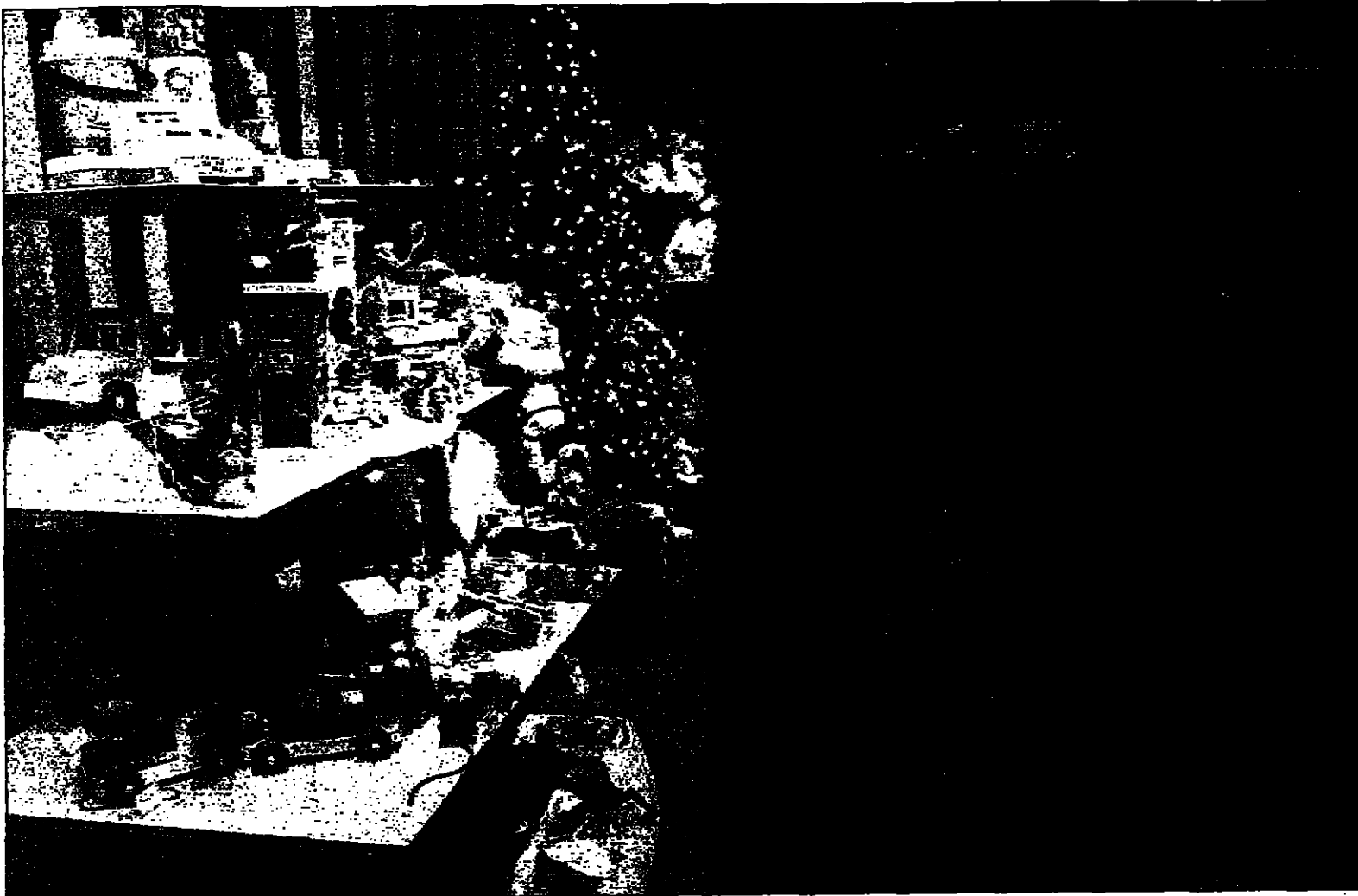
Changes to PRP  
tax relief will  
hit millions of  
employees in the  
pocket, says  
Caroline Merrell

Millions of people who have enjoyed the tax-free benefits of profit-related pay (PRP) for a decade will find themselves considerably poorer in the new year as changes introduced under the last Government begin to bite.

Since 1987, profit-related pay schemes have enjoyed generous tax perks. There are now around 14,000 schemes in operation with approximately 3.7 million members. Philip Fisher, from Chantrey Vellacon, believes that around 1.5 million of these will be affected by the changes coming in next month. "Those hit will be members of those schemes that have an accounting period running from January," he said. Mr Fisher said that these people will be around 2 to 3 per cent poorer because of the change.

Under present rules, PRP paid to an employee under a scheme registered by the Inland Revenue is free of income tax in any year up to the lower of £4,000 or 20 per cent of the employee's pay in the profit period to which the PRP relates. According to the Inland Revenue, the average amount earned by people in PRP schemes is less than £1,400 a year.

The Government intends completely to abolish the tax relief on these schemes by the year 2000. The first stage of the abolition of the tax relief comes in to effect from the beginning of next year. The ceiling on tax relief will be halved to £2,000, halving the maximum benefit to higher-rate taxpayers from £1,600 to



Harder times: the impending changes to tax relief on profit-related pay will mean that millions of people will have less to spend next Christmas

£800. A higher-rate taxpayer who earns £4,000 in PRP will be £66 a month worse off under the new rules. Someone paying the basic rate of tax and earning the full £4,000 of profit-related pay will be £38 a month worse off.

In 1999 the ceiling will be halved again to £1,000, and by the year 2000 the tax relief will be phased out altogether.

Barclays Bank, which employs a total of 66,000 people, said that a high proportion of them would be worse off next year. Alan Grant, Barclays Bank personnel executive,

said: "They will begin to feel it in January." He said the biggest impact would be on those who earn £35,000 or more, adding: "Someone on this salary will be around £20 a month worse off next year."

Mr Grant pointed out that the tax relief before the change would be worth £1,049. After the change this tax relief would fall to £650. Around £159 of this extra tax would be applied to the lump sum available under the scheme, while the rest would apply to the monthly salary. Mr Grant said that the changes to wages

had been communicated to all its staff.

For those who work at Boots, the high street chemist, the impact could be even greater. More than 50,000 of the company's employees benefit from PRP. The company says that removing all the tax relief from its scheme would make the average employee £200 a year worse off, assuming an average salary of £10,000. Boots does point out that the full impact of the changes to tax relief will not be felt until the year 2000.

A Boots spokesman said:

"There has been no decision to compensate employees for the tax payable. We are, however, reviewing all bonus arrangements and will seek to ensure that our schemes continue to act as incentive and reward for all effective performance."

Stuart Hibbert, director of Arthur Andersen, the accountants who were one of the pioneers of PRP schemes, said: "We have seen a small number of schemes disappear. Many companies are waiting until 1999 to begin to phase the schemes out."

A survey carried out by

Arthur Andersen in September showed that only 45 per cent of companies have told employees about the reduction in wages. The accountancy firm also found that there was still little pressure on employers to make up the difference in employees' wage packets.

Mr Fisher said the cost to employees of making up the difference could be considerable. He says the cost to a company of making up the lost wages for 5,000 workers could be nearly £11 million, assuming that 50 per cent are higher-rate taxpayers.

## INSIDE

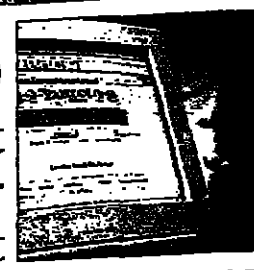
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Anne Ashworth  
on new year  
tax increases

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Use Internet  
to give your  
wealth a boost



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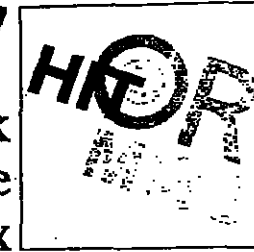
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WEEKEND MONEY  
is edited by Anne Ashworth

## Bank Tessas found wanting

Tessa savers have lost up to £500 in interest by going to a high street bank rather than shopping around, according to a survey on Tessa returns published this week. The survey, by MoneyFacts, the savings data specialist, shows that a Barclays Bank Tessa maturing on January 3, 1998, will pay out £11,099.67, £510 less than the top-of-the-table Chorley & District Building Society's Tessa.

The Barclays Tessa was 85th out of the 91 providers in the annual survey. The picture was almost as poor at other high street banks. NatWest, Lloyds and Midland are all paying out remarkably similar amounts and were ranked 72nd, 73rd and 74th in the table.

Abbey National and Halifax are both in the bottom half of the table, with only TSB among the major providers achieving a respectable payout to savers. TSB will be giving Tessa savers £11,509.46, £250 more than unlucky Tessa holders at sister company Lloyds Bank.

Stephen Bullock, chief executive of Chorley & District Building Society, says the cost of paying dividends to shareholders is why the returns from high street banks are so much lower than at his society. The three-branch Lancashire society is a mutual and aims to maximise payouts to members.

Mr Bullock said: "We are a mutual organisation and our interest rate structure does not have to take into account paying shareholders. It allows us to operate on a narrower interest rate margin than the big banks." The Chorley also paid out a 0.75 per cent bonus to its Tessa holders on maturity on the full value of the amount saved.

A NatWest spokesman admitted that until recently the bank set its Tessa rates to match the other high street banks rather than offer the best returns, explaining why returns from the major banks differ by only a few pounds.

He said: "We have now taken a conscious decision to be a lot more aggressively competitive in the Tessa market. Before that we were only comparable to the other banks now we want to be the best in the market."

A Lloyds spokeswoman



Mutual friends: savers rallied round when deposits went missing in *It's a Wonderful Life*

claimed the bank's policy was to offer a "competitive" Tessa, but admitted that its aim was to be competitive only against the other high street banks.

More than four million savers have put nearly £27 billion into Tessas, and the industry is predicting a sales boom in 1998 as the April 1999 deadline for the end of tax-free Tessas and the start of individual savings accounts (ISAs) approaches. Nearly 400,000 Tessas opened in 1993 will

mature during 1998, while many other people who have not taken advantage of their tax-free allowances will be looking for a Tessa before the tax drawbridge is raised.

ISAs will offer only £1,000 a year in tax-free savings, much less than the £9,000 that can be put into a Tessa over a five-year period. But until April 1999 savers can still open a Tessa and benefit from tax-free savings for the next five years. When the Tessa matures, savers will be allowed to

transfer their capital (a maximum of £9,000) into an ISA, although the interest accumulated will not be transferable.

First-time Tessa buyers can put a maximum of £3,000 into a Tessa in its first year, £1,800 in each of the second, third and fourth years and £600 in the final year. But anyone who touches their capital in the five-year period will lose their tax-free rights.

The MoneyFacts survey underlines the importance of shopping around for the best Tessa rate. The Times carries a listing of the best rates currently on offer (see page 46). Savers can choose between a fixed or a variable interest rate, depending on whether they think rates are likely to rise or fall.

NatWest is keeping to its pledge to be the best in the market, offering the highest fixed rate of 7.45 per cent. "You can no longer criticise us for lack of competitiveness," said a spokesman. However, variable rates are currently higher. The best rates on offer are from Melton Mowbray Building Society and Sun Banking Corporation at 7.9 per cent and 7.85 per cent respectively.

A year ago the position was reversed, with fixed rates better than variable rates.

PATRICK COLLINSON

### TESSA LEADERS AND LAGGARDS

RANK/PROVIDER	VALUE
1) Chorley & District BS	£11,610
2) Julian Hodge Bank	£11,600
3) Investec Bank (UK)	£11,593
4) Norwich & Peterborough BS	£11,578
5) Buckinghamshire BS	£11,565
46) Abbey National	£11,382
55) Halifax (Gold)	£11,354
72) NatWest	£11,248
73) Lloyds	£11,247
74) Midland	£11,231
85) Barclays	£11,099

Source: MoneyFacts. Projected maturity value of variable-rate first Tessas as at January 3 1998, assuming the Tessa was opened on January 4, 1993, with the maximum investment of £3,000 and maximum contributions made on each anniversary.

## THE JUPITER INCOME TRUST - A CONSISTENT STAR PERFORMER

	5 YEARS	3 YEARS	1 YEAR
JUPITER Income	+220%	+103%	+18%
FIDELITY Recovery	+174%	+42%	+3%
PERPETUAL UK Smaller Co's	+171%	+45%	-1%
SCHRODER Smaller Co's	+152%	+74%	+4%
M&G Income	+135%	+55%	+13%

Jupiter Income Trust compared with the top performing fully PEPable unit trusts over 5 years from the four largest unit trust management groups

Source: M&G. Offer to bid, gross income reinvested, to 1.12.97.

It is consistent investment performance over time which will determine the value of your PEP.

As the table shows, over five years Jupiter's Income Trust has handsomely beaten the best-performing fully PEPable funds from each of the four largest unit trust PEP providers. It has also beaten the same funds over one and three years.

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